# THE MARQUIS OF CARABAS

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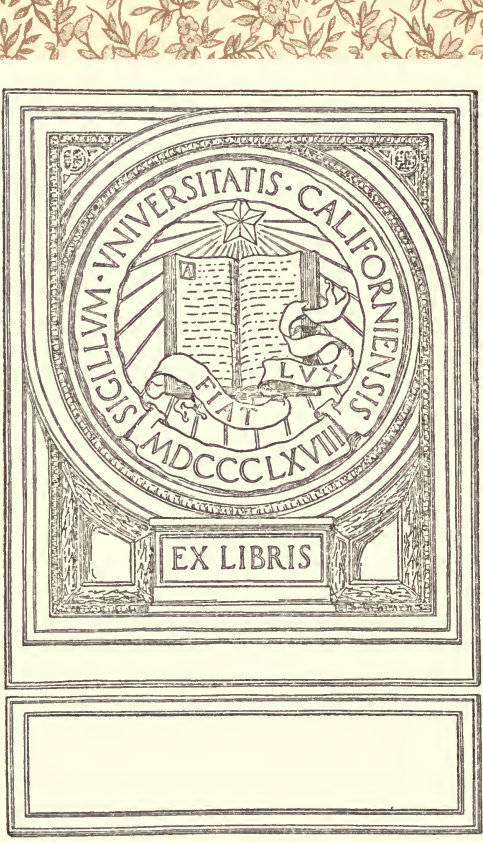
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THE

# MARQUIS OF CARABAS.

BY

HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD,

AUTHOR OF

"THE AMBER GODS," "THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT," ETC.

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# THE MARQUIS OF CARABAS.

## I.

In the intense lights and shadows of the high noon of a summer day there is a consciousness of the fulness of life, the brooding power of creation, absent from all the purple pencillings of twilight, the blushing promises of dawn.

One could hardly be more sensible of this than when rocking in a boat off Coastcliff that day and gazing at the hillside known by sailors out at sea. One saw there, midway in air, the cottage with its many gables and its quaint casements full of flowers and blowing clouds of muslin, with its grapery and orchid-house at hand, half hidden in its honeysuckles, in the sweetbrier that intoxicated the air about it, in the white rose of that perfect race whose presence is a patent of nobility, that climbed almost to the low roof and thrust its blossoms of living perfumed snow in any win-

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dow that gave them passport. And all around the cottage were the gardens between their walls once mortised with earth, in whose interstices every threadlike grass had sprung, and over which a web of vines was thrown, falling and catching and clinging everywhere in green content. There were alleys of shade, with the boughs pleached overhead and with moss beneath the feet; there were spaces purple with the periwinkle and the pansy; through them all a brook danced down the hill, a fall of sunshine, of amber-colored ripples and creamy foam. Ending in front upon the strand into which ran the elm-fringed highways of the town under the hill, behind the house they climbed in terraces and sloping stretches of blossom till the blazing beds of geranium vignetted the whole in fragrant fire against the sky. Far in the upper air a hawk, soaring on motionless wings, sailed in his superb flight till distance wrapped him, and the fleeting breeze darkened and brightened every leaf and spray as it followed in pursuit. One felt, in looking there, the presence and suggestion of nothing but abounding life, — life overflowing in color and warmth and splendor.

But was it life indeed? Was it life or death that ruled the spell in that charmed spot? The spirit of the hour answered, as a wind from the sea lifted the curtain like the banner of a conqueror, and a sheet of glory cast up from its silver panoply filled the room with the sudden light on which two great violet eyes for the first time opened. A robin lit upon the white rose stem and swelled its throat to warble a rapture of song. Then the wind swept out again with the tidings, to the geraniums that might have deepened all their flames, to the hyacinths tossing loose their mist of sweetness, to the breast-high hedges of spicy box which little hands should one day part, and into whose sheltered nests a little face should peer, rustling and rioting among them all with *debonair* freedom ere it fled back to the swinging sea. And the weary, happy mother within laid her cheek on Adelaide's and led her away down the pleasant path of her earliest dream.

## II.

From noon deepening into afternoon above a sea bloom-bathed in veils of vapor; from sunset smouldering in the west and outblazing in a double world of scarlet glory; from pensive summer twilight sown with stars, whose cool air is a bewilderment of odor in this garden, with its beginnings of new being in such peace and gladness, the mind will wander across many an horizon of calm and of commotion, through many an arching heaven full of varying weather, over the tumultuous tract where the crowded surges of a sudden storm are crushing among themselves as the mid-sea tempest drives northward on its way, ere it pauses in the night of this same noon on low equatorial waters weltering weightily in the midnight darkness of the after-storm.

A vessel rides there. So dark herself as to be unguessed, she seems but a high value on the shadow of the night. If she flies a flag at all, it is

duskier than the ragged cloud that floats before that struggling star and extinguishes its spark. She carries no light fore or aft. A swift and sharp-stemmed craft, she is a thing that hides herself in the elements, that haunts horizons and that mingles with the tints of evening, — an outlaw of the waters.

She rests now in the havoc that the tropical fury has wrought, that she may discover into what neighborhood she has been driven, and make some slight repair. The sighs that rise from below might fill her sails and waft her slowly on, the moans there might betray her; but they that guide her helm take care no stranger comes near enough to regard the one or the other, and her head has been steadily pointed toward the low lagoons of the coral reefs, where her freight shall be discharged and her gold counted down. As she lies deep in the sea, one wave rolling after another turns up its broad back of phosphorescent light, and for an instant all her blackness starts out on the gloomy field of the night — the skeleton of shrouds and yards with something ominous of all disaster in their every line — and is lost again in

the swallowing shadow. Around her is the desolation of the flying hurricane; if she is spared, it is through the kinship of cruel things, as evil an agency herself as the hurricane. Warm puffs of wind wander over her as she rocks, wind whose heavy wings are yet wet with the rain; but lately cries were borne upon it and the dead shocks of the minute-gun. But the dark thing hidden in the gulfs of the night had given no answering sign. And again there were cries from this side and from that, as if spirit voices mocked at her through wind and whirlwind. Sometimes now, as a long wave runs down to lift the keel with a different motion from that of the sullen swell on which it rides, those that lean over the side see, in the clear and lighted depth of the hollows, fragments of a wreck floating by; once, indeed, a naked hand and arm rise in the gleam and are drawn down again, — a ship's figure-head it may be, for directly afterward the word *El Rey* is spelled out in the wave as if with letters of fire. But this other is a human face, with hair swimming out about it in long rays. Now an empty spar goes by and drives downward between the sea-ridges. For many minutes noth-

ing follows; and now another spar slides down the side of the advancing crest. A form is lashed to it with stout bands, — a half-drowned woman, on her bosom a little child, its face nestling in her throat. As the warm wave bursts and scatters its blinding showers, upbuoyed upon the next she bends her head again above the little one to break the blow of the spray, — it may be she does so still, no longer consciously, but by the instinct that will only die when she does.

The nameless craft sits so low in the water that the boat-hooks in the hands of two men in the main-chains grapple the spar and hold it a moment.

"Unsafe — unwise, Captain," one of those above them says to another.

"I will! I swear I will!"

"Think twice, my Captain," urges the smooth voice. "Always best to let them go by. No funeral of ours."

"It's a white face and a woman's face, rare sight for the *Nightbird*." If the speaker's voice was the more brutal it was the more honest too. "It's a white face and a woman's face, and a face

that loves life!" he cried. "As for the rest, who knows?"

"No one, indeed. And no one cares to know. The thing is out of rule. The men have a right to mutiny, exposed to this danger. And they always take their right."

The Captain surveyed him a moment. "Lend a hand, Ladeuce," he demanded then, as if nothing had been said. "Here Jasper! Jasper!" And with the help that came at this command the bulk rose slowly up the dark side, plunged back again into the surge with the stout bands severed, and the woman and the child lay upon the deck.

It was but a moment before these waifs of wreck were within the cabin, underneath its guarded lamp, plied with such restoratives as were at hand. But for one of them the rough effort was presently in vain. A murmured name in the ear of Ladeuce, who had carried her, a half-breathed sentence, a lifted hand, and the woman still gazed up at the rude brows knit above her, but her countenance was only a mask of clay. The child, whose pulses but lately had been beating so feebly against her silent ones, was left to

the mercies of men who seldom knew mercy; and it was not many minutes before her shotted shroud was wrapped about her. She carried with her to her shifting grave no evidences of her identity that Ladeuce could sequester, — no ring upon her finger, no shred of linen inscribed with delicate charactery or crest.

When Ladeuce returned to the cabin the child was in the arms of the Captain; his little limbs were chafed in spirit by the man's coarse hands, and some warming fluid was forced between his lips. Ladeuce stood by in silent scorn. Would the child have gone with the woman but for his own misjudged interference? Would the boy work more or less mischief here? Would that ring, that torn shred of linen, give further clue to relationship or rank than the words that had been whispered to him? Was there by possibility a ransom in the case?

Meanwhile the boy had suddenly lifted his long-fringed lids over two eyes large enough and dark enough to betray a southern lineage, and, meeting the eager glance of the man that held him, a smile had burst out upon his face, as if

some splendid flower should open all at once, and he held up his little arms and uttered an unintelligible babble that was mere music. "It warms the cockles of my heart!" cried the Captain, as the whole thing struck straight to some spot in that savage organ which had been unfilled before. "I might have had one of my own — I might have had one of my own," he muttered to himself, stung by something of that same instinct which makes the tigress die for her whelp. "Hark ye, Ladeuce!" he exclaimed then suddenly, in tones there was no gainsaying while on board the *Nightbird:* "And Jasper, here! This is my son. I adopt him for my own. I call him by my name, Dominique Dacre, from this day forth and forever!"

"A good name enough till he comes to his own," said Ladeuce. And something dropped into his pocket from his opening hand; when the Captain's heartstrings were knit into the life of this boy he might take it out again. "A good name enough till he comes to his own."

"He shall never know another," the Captain answered.

"Well, a name that will fetch his purpose," said Ladeuce. "Will you add mine too?"

"No joint-stock property," replied the Captain good-humoredly. "It's a case where two are company and three a crowd. And besides, — where did you come across that name yourself? It never was given you in baptism." And the Captain laughed as he had not for a twelvemonth, and tossed up the child with a face for the moment as kindly as if no chains were clanking just below.

"It never was," the other said. "I've a name of my own. Perhaps I'll wear it again when I'm done with the *Nightbird*. It's Brown, or Gray, or Green, or Black, any good colored name," said he with a low laugh. "But as for Ladeuce, they gave it to me with their lingo in the Levant, and it answers for the business as well as another, — as well as Kidd or Ketch."

The Captain threw the child into Jasper's arms while he poured out a bumper of brandy. "What's to be done with the boy now, Jasper?" he asked. "The little dog was born to live."

"What is of more consequence," said Ladeuce,

"is what 's to be done with him when the *Nightbird* is lying low."

"That is my lookout," said the Captain; "when the time comes I 'll give my orders. All you have to do is to obey them. You 'll have it soon your own way," he added quickly and in a different tone. "A few more heavy freights, a few years further on — I 've hated it from the first — I shall turn 'longshoreman and leave the ship to you, Ladeuce."

"I 'll ask no more."

"Here 's to the *Nightbird's* luck then," cried the Captain, lifting his glass to the ray of the bull's-eye that fell over the three men and the child between them, "when you are making the runs, and I, wherever I hang out, am dividing the profits."

"If we don't all hang out to more purpose first," said Ladeuce, with his low laugh again.

"Too near the wind, too near the wind," said the Captain. "Meanwhile I 'll keep my son with me. Now, Jasper, see what you can do for the boy below."

And as Rome drew half her wolfishness from

the stream that curdled the milk of human kindness in her first ancestor's veins, so no one can say how much of his wild moods Dominique owed to the woe-worn princess of some fierce desert race, the melancholy and the fever of whose captivity mingled like fire with the young current of his blood, while the slave-ship shook loose again her dismal sails and floated over those dark waters, once haunted by the buccaneer and now by her, till she was lost in the murk of the night.

## III.

BRIGHTLY as they did the day, fifteen years before, when Adelaide was born, the gardens bloomed about the cottage on the hill, and still the perfume of heliotrope and of carnation and honeysuckle filled the air with an under-heaven of sweetness.

But Adelaide, in the freshness and dew of her youth, with a freak of this flower's fire and that one's color, was something finer than the garden grew; the velvet of her cheek had the sweetness of the rose, the midnight stars that looked down on the violets where she had trod wore something of the lustre of her eyes. She approached life with a keen interest in it. But if she looked upon it as a drama in which she was to play a part, it was without a thought of the world's applause, but only of the silent audience of God and her own soul.

Adelaide was accustomed to the rude life of the coast, the fisheries, the storms, the calms. Much of her mother's property and of her own was in shipping, where it had been left by her father's death. Going now and then with her mother to their agent in the city, fifty miles away, she knew their ships and barques as old John the gardener knew his flowers. This was the *Winged Victory*, that made voyages to the Farther Indies; this was the *Ship of State*, that did business in the Pacific; this was the clipper *Puck*, that carried cotton from New Orleans to Liverpool, light as a cork and swift as an arrow; these dark oil-soaked hulks were whalers; this crowd of sloops and schooners brought revenues from the seas about the Georges and the Labrador. Sometimes with a glass she saw the *Winged Victory* slide by on the sea-line, and all her fancies followed it, its long curves, its splendid figure-head, its strange and rich outlandish freights, its name, its destinations, all belonging to the other side of the globe and to dreams remote from daily life. She could not help the feeling that the *Winged Victory* was more her property than all the others put together. She did not believe it was be-

cause her mother, indulging a poetical side of her nature, added another pearl to her daughter's necklace every time the ship came in, — almost the only extravagance of which the mother, who spent her substance in certain Confederated Charities, was guilty.

It was towards nightfall of the southerly tempest, whose force the fishing schooners faced as cattle face the wind upon the hills, and that had shut in the day and the sea with flying scuds of spray, that Adelaide flung on her cloak and went with Gascoygne down to the lighthouse and the sea. Nobody thought to gainsay her, and Allia made haste to follow her. "It is delightful," said Adelaide, making herself heard through the uproar, "these drenching showers that take you for a part of nature, and fall on your face as if you were a leaf yourself. When we are out-doors in this weather we are a part of the storm. See the bough of that tree swing in the wind. I am going to swing my cloak in that same way. Ah, it would be delightful, I mean, if one did not have to think of the mackerel-men out among the shoals, the green seas washing over their decks and their sailors clinging to the — "

"What makes you think of them then?" asked Allia.

"I don't, much. I feel too light-hearted. I feel as if some beautiful thing were going to happen to me."

"Animal spirits," said Gascoygne, who just now, in the warmth of his medical studies, referred everything to physical causes.

Twilight had fallen, and lights glanced in the town as they came down the shore. The rain had nearly ceased. At intervals around them the strokes of the sea, the grinding of the broadsides on the breaker, the shriek of the shelves of sand as they tore away from the bluff, made a tumult which had a fascinating terror as the darkness deepened, till suddenly, through all the storm shadows, sailed up a dull red flash smothered instantly in the waves and the weather. It came so full upon their faces that they all drew back before it.

"A ship in distress!" cried Gascoygne. "The packet-ship!"

"And close in shore," said Adelaide. "I wonder," she exclaimed presently, "if a boat can be launched —"

"No sooner said than done," said Gascoygne. "There they come round from the town with their lanterns, the hardy fellows. Now, if I leave you, can you get home alone? I will bring you some flotsam and jetsam if I find any," and he was running to join the group that hurried to the lighthouse ledge, and whose loud welcome came back on the gust; for Gascoygne, with his practical sense, the gymnast and waterman of his college, too, was no mean accession to the volunteers of an instant.

"I hate shipwrecks!" cried Allia, as the two were blown up the hill. "It is singular that there always is a shipwreck whenever I come to Coastcliff."

"We get them up to order," said Adelaide.

"I don't know how it happens," persisted Allia, "I only know it does happen. Now I have come to stay you'll be having drowned people in the parlors!"

"That would be dreadful," said Adelaide running backward. "Don't you think it is lighter? The moon must have come up. The storm is certainly lifting, except these slaps of rain," as one of

them struck her. "Turn and look at the sea in the moon that has broken from the cloud. Oh, such a white and black splendor! And there is the wreck. I can see it distinctly, with all its ropes and ratlines."

"It looks like a gallows!"

"Ah, how majestic and dark," cried Adelaide, "in the midst of the white fury! And when you know it is so crowded with eagerness and fear. There goes a rocket! A great green shooting star. They are pulling the cables across. I am so glad the moon has come out, for with the darkness the scene is robbed of half the horror!"

"It will go in again. There, it has gone! Why will you talk about such things, Adelaide! Here I am trembling in every nerve."

"You have such a tender little heart! And it is shocking for us to be so satisfied here while not a mile away they are holding their lives by a thread."

"I'm not satisfied. I wish there was no such thing as death. I don't see why it was made. I hate it!" cried Allia.

"So do I," said Adelaide. "I should like to live

forever on this happy earth. And yet the people there — "

At the door she paused again, while the moon scattering the clouds once more ran out on their long rifts, lighted the terrible beauty of the tossing sea, and gave its brilliance to the dying storm, lingered and looked back, perhaps in some dim way aware that fate was busy with her in that hour.

It was later in the evening that she was stooping at the hearth to adjust the embers there, the light spreading over her face, when the door was flung open and Gascoygne's voice was heard, and the tramp of feet, and her mother and Miss Grey and Allia were greeting a shaggy fellow whom Gascoygne designated as Captain Dacre, and a drenched and bare-throated boy by the name of Dominique, and the boy had turned and stood bending before her, transfixed as it were in his gaze.

Dominique had lived till this night like a young barbarian, in the enjoyment only of his sensations; men and women had been shadows passing to and fro. All at once danger had unsealed his eyes and

he had found two beings in whom life was as living a flame as in himself, the one when, as he clambered hand over hand across the cable, a splendid face shone up out of the sudden moonlight that lit the dark hollows of the roaring breaker over which he passed, and Gascoygne, who had waded and swum out with ropes round his waist as far as his strength held, had his arms about the boy, helping him to shore. The way in which the mysterious and dreadful shadows underneath yielded this golden head and eager face was to Dominique one of those things stamped from without as inseparably as if projected from an interior experience. And now Adelaide, made magnetic for the moment, perhaps, by the intensity of his own emotion, as a magnet lends its power to steel, with the glow of the fire overlying all other glow, and the pitiful violet eyes fastened on his own, seemed to him, despite all that might have crossed his path, the first woman he had ever seen.

"The strangest part of it all is," said Gascoygne as they separated at length, he and his cousins, when they had stood a moment listening to the slow drip of the sodden lilac-trees, "that when I

saw a shape just beyond, growing more and more distinct, and finally the moonlight burst over that white face with its wet hair and the great wild eyes of the boy, I felt as if the storm and I together had made him!"

His feeling echoed in the young girl's heart. She had some unworded impression that Dominique was a being of new existence, as if it were impossible he could have any consciousness in his sixteen years of which she was not already a part. And all night long that face, as she had gazed up at it when kneeling beside the fire, that white and beautiful bending face, hung over her dreams in the guise of varying moods, as the reflection of a star hangs in the water when the tide comes in, and sparkles and shifts and changes, and is another and yet the same anew for every wave that breaks; and all night long she lay plastic in the hands of those dreams that mould us like fate, and come to us but once in all our lives.

## IV.

THE stranger to Captain Dacre found about him an air of rude grace, half brusque, half deferential, that was not unattractive. The familiar found in voice and manner a gentle pathos that touched the heart. He was a man apparently warmed with a single sentiment, — the love of his son. During the days of residence at the cottage that were enforced by the consequences of his exposure, he yielded to certain confidential impulses, urged by his nervous excitement, in a way that made the household know him better than by years of casual acquaintance. As he saw the simple life of the family, as he watched the younger ones out-doors, he became possessed with longing for such training for Dominique, to whom all that his wealth had yet been able to give was life at some watering-place, where fine ladies made a pet of the boy for his beauty. What might not such companionship do for him now, — a youth with

such nobility and leadership as Gascoygne, a girl with such spirit and such sweetness as Adelaide! For Dominique's good had been the end of this man's aims from the moment when the child's innocence had pointed a contrast with sin, that had controlled him until a stronger power had suddenly appeared to him, like a Face in the dark, and made him the subject of one of those swift Wesleyan conversions that transform a whole nature and a whole life. For Dominique he had changed his business upon the sea, had eventually left all business there, had wandered about the world in search of gentle influences, had studied, as he could, manners and books. For Dominique he had made himself a gentleman. He did not feel a hypocrite now in resolving to render Mrs. Stuart his friend by assuming that the thing was already done. "I cannot be grateful enough for the shelter you have given me, a stranger," he began, on the morning of the day he felt he must go away.

"I should have no right to such a pleasant home as mine, if it were not always open to those in trouble," said Mrs. Stuart, turning on her finger

the ruby ring that she wore as Regent of the Confederated Charities. "And it must, it must," she said, "have been a fearful day — that of the wreck — an awful hour that night."

"It was," said Captain Dacre. "And yet my nerves are cast in iron. I have led a life that does not spare the nerves — an adventurous life — for several years commanding a cruiser of one of the South American States" — which was perfectly true. "I have done much that all the red gold of Guinea would not tempt me to do again," looking up quickly under his lowering brows, "and the life of a sea-faring man is at best one of dangers, but I have known few hours like that night's, when I thought to leave Dominique alone or be left alone by him. When," said he presently again, "one has passed the flush of his years desperate deeds and he are not friends. Death wears another face from that when his blood was strong with the strength that likes to defy. And although I trust I have made my peace for — whatever — errors— And then too," said Captain Dacre, coming back to the table that he had left and leaning his arms upon it, while he sat look-

ing at her in a way that was pure simplicity,— "and then too, I felt I must live to atone to Dominique for the wrong I have done him in making him my son."

"And I have thought the same about Adelaide!" cried Mrs. Stuart, looking up at the ivy-wreathed picture of the girl which Gascoygne's pencil had filled with something of the life and lustre of her young beauty. "If she had a stronger mother — I wonder if all parents feel the same! Your wife is no longer living?"

"I have not — no, Mrs. Stuart. Dominique's mother was lost at sea," in a dry, hoarse tone.

"That is so sad. And what a handsome lad he is!" glancing at the group in the garden path.

"Is he not? And so warm-hearted. True as steel. A trifle too quick — but we lose our spirit full soon. I am going to make a confession," said the Captain. "I am superstitious. Sailors are apt to be. I do not know but the storm tossed me here, a vagrant, to some end. Could I remain where intercourse like this is possible for him and educate my boy! I may have neglected duty in affection. He sailed with me

while I was in the service. He can handle a ship as well as I can myself, quite as well, but as for books his mind is virgin soil, or nearly so." And the end was that they went to look at the Lonely Beach House five miles away, over the bridge, and along the causeway winding round the head of the salt meadows that stretched far off beyond the wood to lose their green and russet tints in the sparkle of the sea.

It was a stone building, much the color of the dunes around it; over it a group of oaks twisted their boughs in contortions that told what gales had whipped them. Behind it, redeemed from almost impassable meadow, lay a fallow field and an old plum orchard. In front the water was smooth, but on either side the half-mile-long reach of quicksands and shallows frothed the sea white in stillest weather.

"Is it not dreary?" said Adelaide, when she and Dominique rode there first together. "Oh, so desolate! In the storms the surf sends spray over the window-glass. It would be sad to live there."

"It would be fine!"

"Do you know what is going to happen if

your father takes it? You will ride over every day and study with Miss Grey. She knows so much. Mamma says she completes the circle of the arts and sciences. And she will always be with us. Allia is half her charge."

Dominique was silent a moment, and then he turned and seized Adelaide's hand. "It makes my heart beat!" cried he. "We shall read from the same book."

"I am so glad to be alive," he said, as he and Adelaide strolled in the lower terraces of the gardens on the hill that night. "I never thought a week ago, as Death leaped after us in every surge, that I should be here now, drawing such sweet breath in your garden, where I have crossed half the side of the world to be, Adelaide. I shall call you so? It is so beautiful a name." And the two young beings lingered there listening to a distant echo, while the brook bubbled its sweet monotone, the flowering terraces shook out all their perfumes, and the moonlight spread floods of silver around them, all unthinking that they stood no longer on the outside, but had entered into the great mysteries of life.

## V.

DOMINIQUE'S attendance upon Miss Grey was exemplary, but it by no means lightened that lady's labors. Whatever gifts came by nature Dominique could make th most of but was the thing to be conquered by trouble, he measured it and the consequence of its absence, and made up his mind to do without it. He held his side of the book properly, it is true, but he looked at Adelaide. When Miss Grey urged his father's desire, he would bend over the page with determination, puzzle himself into a frantic perplexity, then the volume would spin through the air, and he would stalk from the room and be seen no more that day, while his penitence on the morrow was only exceeded by his ignorance. At other times, when Adelaide was at the point of tears over the gloom of her problem, Dominique would dart to the central pang, make all as clear as light, and Adelaide's recitation would be perfect while his was

only laughing uncertainty. "Why should I learn how to demonstrate that Rectilineal figures which are similar to the same rectilineal figure are also similar to one another?" he would say. "It stands to reason that they are. And what earthly purpose does it help for me to prove that Similar solid parallelopipeds are to one another in the triplicate ratio of their homologous sides? And as for the Series of prisms of the same altitude that may be circumscribed about any pyramid such that the sum of the prisms shall exceed the pyramid by a solid less than any given solid — I wish I knew the man that invented that precious stuff; I'd make a prism of him. At any rate, if he was n't the rest of it, he should be black and blue!" Then, in the midst of lessons, he would troll some catch boasting precisely opposite accomplishments, and Miss Grey in despair would recommend Captain Dacre to apply his boy to anything but books.

But Captain Dacre was inexorable. He had found books a refuge when he forsook active life. If Dominique could not learn everything between their covers, he should know where to go for what

he might want in them by and by. He spent half his own time poring over books, or in his little laboratory, gathering what he could, to give back to Dominique in any way in which he could assimilate it. And it was no new effort; ever since his aroused heart had changed his whole manner of life, he had had the single hope that his contact might not be worse for the boy than death by drowning would have been at first. Once in every week, too, he spent a day and night at the cottage, giving some instruction in navigation, and, if the stars shone, a sailor's lecture in astronomy, where alone he was better posted than the encyclopedic Miss Grey. The superintendence received from Gascoygne, in the latter's vacations, however, was a relief to the Captain, who feared to place Dominique among men, suffering new pain in the thought that, if his treatment were hurtful, even that was a consequence of his own career, and Dominique might in fact be ruined because Captain Dacre had been. And then he subjected the boy to cautious probing, to discover if he had any of that strength by which, if ruin came, he could climb out of it on God's hand.

But Dominique knew nothing of all these thoughts and fears. He was happy; that was enough. He was punctual at the cottage on the hill, sometimes sailing across from breaker to breaker, sometimes rising at dawn and walking the five miles, his white face flushed with pleasure, and coming in laden with wild treasures, — treasures over which old John, the gardener, who, like all the rest of Coastcliff, had followed the sea in his youth, and although apt to his business now, was, and always would be, strange to the wild-wood, bent his broad back with satisfaction, studying their novelty with many a self-contained chuckle, while wiling Dominique into relations of his boyish life, before the wreck of the packet-ship.

They had grown so used to Dominique at the cottage now, his joyous vagaries, his sullen moods, his sunshiny penitences, that they would as easily have known how to do without one of themselves as without him. He made a variety in their feminine lives, to which, in Gascoygne's absences, old John the gardener and Thomas the coachman had never been equal. He had no lack of slight social graces on occasion, remnants of his gay life

at springs and bathing-places, and Mrs. Stuart had been even heard to say, that if she had had a son she should have wished him exactly like Dominique. He was very gentle after that remark, but perhaps could not help taking Adelaide out in his boat and rewarding the mother, who could see them with the glass, by tacking to and fro on the edge of the breaker till she was cold with fear, and had to warm herself with a fever of letter-writing concerning the Confederated Charities, in which Adelaide became but one of a host of children and cares.

When the winter came, the boat was discontinued in favor of a donkey over the road, on which Dominique was often the first to break the drift, but where the wind driving across the meadows as often had blown a way clear for him. The snow was always a delight. He had a team at the door, whenever allowed, to take some one fleeting across country to fantasias of bell music. "It makes me feel as if my heart were swept and garnished," he exclaimed to Adelaide. "The whole earth is so clean it looks spiritualized. Now I understand what my father means. It is

so white you might see its wings." Sleighing done, he mounted his donkey and plodded home over the bridge and the long causeway with its dark meadows ribboned in crystal, and then out of the keen air into the shelter of the wood. He always delayed a little there. There was a pine feathering into the intense blue overhead; there was a huge hemlock shaking down layers of snow from its bent shadow; there were the seed vessels of wiry weeds and the red-berried wayside stems rising through the crust, — the crust in whose hollows there were nothing less than copperas crystals for color, and there was a sort of hush through all the place. Or sometimes the sky was white and the snow was falling through the wood softly and hesitatingly, and it seemed as if he could lie down and let the gentle flakes cover him. When he rode out of the wood into the sea wind that scattered about the beach the icy fringes of the surf, this tranquil spell broke. He urged forward, he sang to drown the resounding wave; he felt, as he withstood the wind, a victor over the elements. Then the windows of the dining-room opened on him, and the Captain, always watching

for him there, saw him flying onward, his dark hair blown back, his cheeks ruddy for the moment, and felt beforehand the embrace that never was forgotten, and the long evening in which the boy would tell him all his day, and he in turn would rehearse his fancies in the firelight.

As they watched the blue flames flickering up the flue, Dominique, wondering about things, spent many a speculation over fire. "I don't know where it comes from," once he said. "Look at that fork leap from the black lump. Where was it before? Where will it be presently? It is like our life, father. Sometimes I think it was the sunshine shut up in the earth when coal was made. I should like to have been born before God finished the earth. What if we could see him make a star!"

"It is clear to me as though I did," his father said. "For had I seen chaos divide, should I have been the wiser, — have known where matter came from and what spirit was? I've been thinking to-day," said the Captain, "of an old belief, I've heard, that matter is eternal as spirit, and of the fight between them. Matter seems to

me in perfect order wherever it is pure matter, in stars and flowers, say; and in man alone, where matter is united with spirit, is there any clash. So that in this warfare of God and matter, this endeavor to reduce matter to the subjection of spirit, man is the battle-ground. And then the thought comes to me, Dominique, that if every seeker who searches a mystery, every mechanic who spans space, works to God's aid in the rough, then they who work in their own portion, reduce their own bodies to obedience, are as much nearer to his purpose as if they were fighting by his side. Eh, Dominique?"

"That we sha'n't know," replied his son, stirring the fire. "But we might know just how the world was made; how coal, how diamonds, came about; where clouds learned colors; what we are here at all for."

"I please myself puzzling about it, and I think, — do you want to hear what I think? Well, then, what if, eternities ago, it came into God's heart to make man, — to be loved, to see the beauty of the universe, to share the joy of being? Whatever the reason, here was the chance to bring

matter into subjection, while the Lord was to strike sparks off from his fulness, as one might say, and work them through this other element that we call matter. And so, before man should come, there were countless centuries to make the star on which he was to live, to mould it, to sun it. As for man himself, how, just with lying there, resting in God's thought, a cherished expectation wrapped in the eternal Father's heart, his possibilities must have increased in comeliness, must have grown sanctified! I hope it's not as if I were burrowing behind unspoken words." And the Captain crossed himself, with an old habit that he had, — a sense of unworthiness following him through all his best endeavor.

"Well, father," said Dominique, who liked this lesson better than his books, and found it less troublesome.

"Well," said the Captain. "Look now at the lace-work of muscles on your hand. But trifles! Dream, then, of the thinking needed to arrange the whole frame with its perpetual machinery, its beauty, its strength, to make it as fair to see as blest to be."

"Perhaps it was n't done by thinking," said Dominique.

"Very likely. Where was the need of thinking? Could there be perplexity or confusion in the mind of Him whose first essence was order? It was all a gentle sequence. There are those that, looking on the huge fossils, say practice betters. To my seeing, in the clumsiest foot of the most prodigious of them all there 's the full design of the perfect foot at last, — only life was adapted to its conditions, a honey-bee's foot not wasted on the creature that wallowed in mire. I love to think of that mysterious time when the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, Dominique, before those wondrous six days when he stripped off veil after veil, and brought out, fiat after fiat, the force of his completed work," said the Captain, reconciling matters in his own way.

"It is like one of the Talmud legends that Miss Grey tells us."

"But that 's apart," said the Captain. "You understand, Dominique, that, it being best to make the earth for man, it was to be made to develop the good in him; and who has found out better than

yourself this summer that that is done by the exercise of our faculties? So in the earth there must be this and that, but most of all coal, coal to get out, more precious than gold, and without which even the iron must rest in its bed. So," continued the Captain, "there may have been a time when the shining water-world wore only a girdle of island gems, then a time when a belt of forests circled the earth, and down in the valleys our destined fuel, — for you and I, Dominique, were as much in that first idea of man as Cæsar, — those forests lifted their green heads into the warm windless weather, into the white fog that kept the sun's hot rays diffused and brooding, sucking in carbon from the heavy air, giant stems growing in rankest swamps and crowned with clouds of shining leaves, leaves pencilled as if with graver's tools in the mine to-day. Then how to store this fuel? How but to let the waters in over it, either through slow sinking of the marshy rafts, or by rending crusts and disturbing seas that rush to find their level, and when drawn off leave above the forest tops fresh soil for new growth, till, layer laid on layer, the rocks heave in convulsion above it all, press it

close and its exhalations with it, then let the earth drive her fires through it till the work is done?"

"And then?" urged Dominique.

"Why then, the earth being one treasure-house inside, other ages draped it with greensward, tented it with blue sky, and breathing beings came to walk upon it."

"Yes, man came in with the roses," Adelaide says.

"The man the Maker planned for and wrought for. And all this only leads to one thought. In the beginning there were plants, simple plants, — it was only when their decay furnished the material that plants with flowers came. When I see how the white violet that Adelaide loves is streaked with purple lines always the same, when I catch the snowflakes on my sleeve, when the speaker in the lecture-desk tells me this chalk is made of shells too tiny for the seeing and each as perfect as the stars in heaven, why then I see that the Lord who made it must love beauty, his least thought beauty itself. And what is beauty but fitness, and how much of that has man? And I say man is not yet complete; part of the work 's to do,

himself to do it; and then I have this fancy,— this. Do you mind, Dominique, there are folks believe in the millennium, when God reigns upon the earth a thousand years; man himself is to be made anew, — do you think the earth must not be new as well? There shall be, it says, a new heaven and a new earth. But how 's this earth that was made so well, — how 's this earth to gain a grace? I 'll tell you. This earth was of the crude matter; this man was of the crude matter. Man dies; his body turns to dust. Do you think the dust is no fouler that has been the keeping of a foul spirit? And do you think the dust that has had a clean soul in it, that has wrought with it for purification, and has been penetrated with truth and trust and sacrifice, won't keep a little of such contact in it, won't be heroic dust? Ah, Dominique, when man, made from dust that meant nothing, returns to a dust that means everything, that means virtue and faith and love, when the whole round earth is made only of mouldering hero-dust, there 'll be a soil fit for the Lord and his saints to walk on, and matter will have gone under in the fight!"

By this time, perhaps Dominique was asleep; and if the silence woke him, there was a game of draughts, or a descent into the little laboratory, where they went through the Captain's last chemical experiments, after which nothing satisfied Dominique, while he himself made ice burn and blanched red roses white, but to bring Adelaide and Allia over to the Lonely Beach for delighted spectators of his magic.

Every night before sleep these two companions went the round of the traps set in the plum-orchard. Once they found a little red fox shivering there, with his bushy tail frozen into the snow; at another time a white arctic owl — a puff of feathers — opened his eyes like yellow flames upon them. By and by the wild geese, flying low, clanged their music overhead as Dominique took his last look at Orion and the night; and then Spring, with her breath-betraying violets, was close at hand. It was a happy, innocent boyhood. And when Captain Dacre looked at Dominique's radiant smile, he wondered if much might not be counterbalanced by his gift of such happiness and innocence to a life snatched out of storm.

## VI.

THREE springs had painted the soft blue and rosy reaches of the sea before the door, had echoed its resounding song, as Dominique's sail took the wet winds of the outer depths, or hung loosely when the boat slipped up between the breakers to the Lonely Beach, Adelaide still his most frequent companion on the water.

One sunset he had kept her out too long; the flushing heavens behind them, the moon swimming up the hollow of the sky, the murmur of the waters of far horizons lifting around them its vast music, the breath of the salt seas blowing freshly about their temples, — all had tempted them to linger for yet another tack, as the boat went about and the sail shot out on the running rope and filled like a cloud, to make the eastern shadow beyond that lane of glory in the moon-swale. But now they knew Gascoygne must be waiting on the shingle to take Adelaide up the hill. "I

think," said Dominique, "I must have some of the old sea-people's blood in my veins; hardly your vikings, maybe those Portuguese sailors who first slipped out of sight of shore. There is no pleasure like sailing. When you ride, you master a horse; but when you sail, you master the great sea itself, you make the winds your slaves. And just to go slipping from crest to crest, soaring and sinking, — it is like flying between the stars! Should you like to live upon it? How great, how glorious that life will be some time, Adelaide, — some time when we can always be together; when I never need bring you back to shore!"

Then he left her and Gascoygne picking their way over the wet stones in the moonlight, — Gascoygne, who had some shadow of trouble in his face, and would not put an arm about her for help, — and his boat went dipping across the bay, and slid at last up the long shallow of the Lonely Beach.

How joyous and unsullied he was! He went up towards the house slowly. The shadow at the rusty iron gate he hardly saw till he was there. It was the Captain, leaning there with his head

between his hands. Dominique stole an arm round his shoulder.

"Is that you, Dominique?" said his father presently. "I was thinking of you. Gascoygne tells me to-morrow is the last examination for entrance to your classes. You are to go up with him. There is your world that you long for."

Dominique heard him with a throb. The world that was enchantment, — yet Adelaide to leave, and this lovely life.

"All our pleasure here is over," said the other sadly. The tone smote Dominique. He drew his arm more closely round his father's neck, and nestled his cheek to his in the outgrown boyish way.

"Indeed, I do not care to go," he said.

"It is settled," answered the Captain. "All settled. I will drive you over in the morning, — one more long hour to ourselves. Leave me now, Dominique; it is chilly, and you are wet." And as Dominique obeyed, the man's head dropped into his hands again, and he was murmuring to himself. "My sin has found me out," he said. "My sin has found me out!"

But Dominique ran in lightly, and only paused to glance into the old dining-room and see in what state the table lay. There was a low fire in the grate, two or three embers of driftwood sending now and then a phantom of flame up the chimney. A man sat beside it, resting his elbows on his arm-chair, and tipping his fingers together before him in the tuneful measure of some pleasant thought. He looked up suddenly with a pair of piercing eyes and a smooth smile that, instead of spreading over his face as smiles do, like sunshine, cut into it like a knife.

"Aha!" said he. "And who may this be? Dominique? Come here and let me have a look at you. The Captain did n't tell you I was here, I 'll dare swear! You may have heard him speak of me, my lad. My name is Ladeuce."

## VII.

When Captain Dacre flung his servant the reins and went around the corner of the house next day, he was greeted by his old Lieutenant from the gallery. "A sightly place you have," said Ladeuce, "though that's a bad harbor, with those breakers. However, you've no use for that any longer. But you're like all the rest of us old sea-dogs, and can't do without the water. Most sailors ashore, I find, must have their patch of ground," he continued, as the Captain still made him no reply. "You take yours out in that old plum orchard, — looks as if our friend Robert might have buried plunder there. You're not troubled with too much company here. I don't know that I ever saw a more capital place for a retired pirate —"

If Ladeuce had not retreated a step he would have had the word knocked down his throat.

"You object to the phrase?" he said coolly, recovering himself. "But I believe it *is* piracy before the law. However, we must regard appearances. I used to remember that when I saw you at Congress Hall with Dominique, and thought of those barracoons on the African coast. You did n't see me. I was there but briefly — just to keep you in sight."

"Ladeuce, what do you want with me?" said the Captain.

"I don't know," answered Ladeuce, biting off the end of a fresh cigar, "that I want anything of you in this mood. When you remember what you are, I may give you a point in the law. But do not disturb yourself. I am in no hurry." And leaning over towards the Captain he added, "I have come to stay."

"You have come — That is impossible!" cried the other.

"Not at all, since you see me here," said the Lieutenant. "And here I mean to stay while it suits me. I shall make forays into the neighborhood of towns and cities. I have some ventures yet upon the sea. I may take a trip or so

now and then. But what more natural than that I should tie up with my old Captain? I have come to help you, though it is late in the day," said Ladeuce, with a laugh that showed all his white teeth, — "I have come to help you bring up Dominique."

The Captain shuddered in spite of the warm noon. "Ladeuce," he said presently, "you and I have nothing in common — "

"Except our memories," laughed Ladeuce again.

"When we parted, the terms were generous enough for you to keep your word and leave me unmolested."

"Attractions," said Ladeuce, "sometimes override promises."

"I desired then," said the Captain more quietly, "only to escape from what might injure or disgrace the boy. Afterward, if fire would have purified me, I should be clean to-day, for I lived in the torments of hell-fire with my remembrances."

"I always thought you were a tender-foot, Captain."

"Here in this haven," continued the Captain,

"I have found peace and rest. What will you have and begone?"

"Nothing," said Ladeuce placidly. "I have told you I have come to stay."

"And I have told you it cannot be."

"It *is*. I am here. You do not want the *fiasco* of turning me out? You want no exposure? Caramba! I am an old friend. I come and I go. I shall, perhaps, hinder you from making a milksop of Dominique. Can he play? Can he put on the gloves? Can he fence? Has he any of the arts of the Spanish gentleman? Perhaps he will take a run with me on the *Nightbird*—"

"The *Nightbird!*"

"The same. Did you think she had laid her bones on the reefs? Not at all. She carries live cargoes into the islands for me yet, and will this many a day—"

"Not she! She shall never carry another! I gave you no deed of her. She is mine. I thought she had gone to pieces a dozen years ago. You shall bring her up and burn her in the offing here, or by heaven," cried Captain Dacre, "I will hang you at her yard-arm yet!"

"Softly, softly, my Captain," said Ladeuce. "If we talk of ropes' ends there are always two ends, you know. And one of us will not be executing that dance on nothing without the other. The *Nightbird* is yours, to be sure. I am ready to yield you account any day. And if you don't want this blood-money, as I heard you call it, will you then tell me on what else you are living now? What bought this place? What furnishes your table? What sends Dominique on his costly errand now?"

"It is true," said Captain Dacre, white as ashes.

"Then let us stop sentimental humbug, if you please; and if you don't," said Ladeuce. "When you are ready to throw up your fortune and ship before the mast, I may believe you have seen the error of your ways. Till you are, no reproaches concerning mine. You have a fancy to be a fine gentleman, — you don't make much of a fist at it. I, also, have taken great pains with myself; you will not be ashamed of me. For the rest, do you forget our old proverb, — *Quien tien tienda, que atienda*? He that has a shop let him keep it.

The *Nightbird* will run her regular trips, sometimes from the Guinea coast to the Windward Islands, and sometimes, when the barracoons are not filled, with a conspicuously innocent lading of palm oil and gums and ivory, and sometimes with one, not quite so innocent, of French brandies, entered in the dark up among these ports. She 's not a hundred miles away from us, as the crow flies, now. As for me, I am your friend, a Southern gentleman with plantations in Central America. Personally, I have my reasons for putting up with you off and on as I choose. I always meant to. It 's enough for you to know, and say, that I find myself in need of a physician, and fancy yours. If you conduct yourself so that any think me unwelcome it is all up with you. And *when* you see your *Nightbird* blazing out there in the stream, you may know it 's all up with me. Then, and not till then. I give you till to-morrow to think of it."

"I do not need it," said Captain Dacre, coming back from where he had stood facing sea and sky as if searching the horizon for help. "You have me in your power. But, Ladeuce, I was your friend in the old time —"

"Ah, that's the way I like to have you talk, my Captain! We were good friends in the old time when we knew danger together! You would say —"

"About Dominique. Plainly, it would kill me — I don't know but it would kill him — to find —"

"That you made your money as a kidnapper and slaver in the African and West Indian waters. Well, give yourself no concern. I make no promises. *No digo nada.* But I hold Dominique as much my charge as yours. He's a fine-looking lad. Have you ever had a hint as to who he is?"

"He is Dominique Dacre!" thundered the Captain, forgetting all the rest in this new face of the foe. "He is that, and nothing else."

Ladeuce gave a long whistle. "Well, let us drink his health, as we did in the little cabin a dozen and a half years ago and more, when he became that. What! No liquors in the house? Well, well, we must reform all that."

The sunshine was never brighter than it lay that day glittering on the bosses of the great sapphire shield with which the sea opposed the sky; but to

Captain Dacre, as he walked away, the world was wrapped in impenetrable gloom.

He had taken his boy from sea and storm only that Ladeuce might ruin him.

Look which way he would, it was dark. What if he gave up everything, — his house and books, his stocks and shares, — Dominique must give up his education as well then. And if he abandoned study, was it likely he would not drift to leeward in all things? And if he gave up fortune, learning, and the rest, would he not also have to give up Adelaide? And that Dominique should one day marry Adelaide had been the Captain's waking dream.

And what if he defied Ladeuce? The man had but to denounce him. Well, neither imprisonment nor death was much to him, — there were those who would walk in prison with him as they had with Peter and Paul. But could he break the boy's heart? Just entering life, full of courage and hope and pride, surrounded by friends, should he suffer this disgrace? He himself could endure his old confederate's presence that was now poisonous to him, the sword of disclosure hanging

, even the keeping of the ill-gotten
nough every piece he spent should sear
ul, as it had long done; but Dominique's
ie and career should not be marred. And for his penalty, — although he could meet scorn, although he could meet death, could he meet the boy's clear eyes when he should know his past? No! If it came to that, God must let him die, — the punishment would be more than he could bear.

It was no wonder the world looked dark to the man. It lay in the shadow of his evil deeds.

## VIII.

It was a week or two after this that Adelaide, driving to the Lonely Beach, left the carriage, as she often did, to gather an armful of the bindweed on her way, and the others drove on, while Captain Dacre presently came down to meet her.

"Now where have you kept yourself?" she cried in her sweet, familiar way. "Have you been plunged in grief for Dominique's loss? We thought perhaps you had gone with him, when you did not come on Wednesday. Ah," as she caught sight of Ladeuce seating the others on the gallery, "you have a friend with you. I am so glad you have a friend!" And then she went up with the Captain through the old plum orchard.

"It seems to me," she said, "that you are too grave about Dominique."

"And to me," he answered her, "that you are too gay."

"Oh," she cried, "I miss him so! But it is

best he should be gone, you know," she added, with her transforming smile. "He will return so much richer than he went."

"Yes, yes, I ought not to care. He has life before him, and mine is behind me. I am like one of these old knotted plum-trees, — ready for felling."

"You are lovely if you are like a plum-tree, with singing things sheltered in the boughs, and sweet fruit dripping honey. Do you think you are like a plum-tree?" she said, with her arch laugh. "Let me tell you, your plum-trees want to be scraped. Mamma will add you to her charities, and send old John over to do it."

"She added me to her charities long ago."

"Speaking of charities, do you know Gascoygne has come home with his degree? Mamma has infected him. He is going to practise in Coastcliff. He does n't need to practise at all, and so he will only take the poor. I tell him he ought to have a ruby ring!" and she laughed in gay mischief.

"Adelaide," exclaimed the Captain, "if I had you here all the time I should bear Dominique's loss better."

"I believe you are making love to me," she said. And she took the old man's hand and raised it to her lips with a pretty motion, half reverence, half caress.

They came up through the broad hall and out upon the gallery where the others sat, Ladeuce rising to receive them. How resplendent she was, as she stood there, with the light of the sea upon her brow and its color in her eyes! But it was not the bloom of the face, the blackness of the dropping hair, the lovely lines and tints within the oval, that made her charm. It was something shining from the eyes and from the smile, as if the interior sunlight illumined the face from the soul. Whatever it was, it was something antipathetic to Ladeuce. He did not blench before it, although the fearless gaze in its first instant seemed to penetrate his disguises. He hated it. And Adelaide, for her part, felt a shuddering repulsion from this dark fellow of the flattering tongue. "What is he doing with the Captain?" the half-unconscious repulsion whispered. "What is he about Dominique for? What will Gascoygne say to him?" while the icy sweetness of her manner benumbed his flatteries.

"The girl for Dominique, eh?" was what Ladeuce's antipathy was just as quietly suggesting. "My dear, I shall put a spoke in that wheel." And he turned to Allia with a suavity that little damsel had not met before. "If I had known," said he, "that my old friend was in such snug quarters and visited by youth and beauty, I should not have stayed so long away from him tossing about the world."

"I can't think of any one's wanting to come to Coastcliff that could go anywhere else," answered Allia, with a look of the great brown eyes that always gave you the impression of the moon just rising.

"Ah! so you want to see the world with those eyes, is it? And what part the most, may I ask?"

"The part," said Allia, "that is different the most from Coastcliff. The people that are unlike these."

"The people? The common —"

"No, indeed," said Allia. "What do I care for the common people? I see enough of them here. My cousin tires me out with them. I mean —"

"The people that continue history. Oh, indeed. Then you would enjoy some of the pageants that I have seen. A coronation, now — "

"Have you ever seen a coronation?" said little Allia breathlessly.

"Upon my word I think a circus finer!" laughed Ladeuce, "except that the clowns wear the fine garments and the jewels are real."

"They have such splendid jewels, I suppose, those people. Dominique says there is a spirit in jewels. He and his father tried to make them in the laboratory, and they could n't, because they had to leave the spirit out."

"Ah, I have some pretty stones I must show you if you are interested in such things. I am quite a collector in a small way, moonstones and tourmalines;" and then, as he saw the increasing sparkle of Allia's glance, "though why," he added, "one should speak of jewels with such eyes shining on him — " and then the elder ladies, rising, closed the business of the moment.

It was long before Captain Dacre returned this call. Perhaps he never would have done so at all if Ladeuce had not declared his own inten-

tion of visiting a physician and taking the cottage on the hill by the way. Once there, however, it was easy going again, and he did not always ask the Captain to go with him. Gascoygne, just through with his studies, did very well for a physician, and gave him good reason for his visits.

"A little trouble with my heart," said Ladeuce lightly to the Captain. "Well, it has always been a susceptible organ. I *know* there's a little trouble with it, and all along of that pretty witch up there."

"Adelaide!" cried the Captain.

"Adelaide go hang!" said his Lieutenant. "Has my lady any smiles? She will have none of them for me. *Dios mio!* These airs and graces make you laugh when you know you have one's fate in your hand. *Cierto!* I will bring the haughty hussy to terms! But the other. Come, now, my Captain, where have you seen such a skin the color of ivory, such lips like a cleft pomegranate?"

Captain Dacre's blood was running cold. "Ladeuce," said he, "I am an old man."

"You are a sly dog, that's what you are. You

are that old rat of the fable, who retired from the world in a rich Stilton cheese. Do you think to have it all to yourself? *Tate!* I have an eye for beauty, too, and I'm not as old as you are. And I fancy," said Ladeuce, getting up and looking himself over in the mirror, "that beauty has an eye for me. You must acknowledge, Dacre, that I'm not an uncomely sort of fellow. I've one face for shore and another for sea. No man-of-war's-man of all those accursed British frigates could recognize the bearded sailing-master of the *Nightbird* in this smooth face. And then I've taken a leaf from your book. I go to the Springs between trips — to the Capital. I study men and manners. I study women. I wonder what the lovely lady in my arms, whose head rests on my shoulder as we waltz, would say if she saw me landing my live cargoes off the Ojo de Toro reefs? Oh, I improve my time," as he still had no reply. "When on the off trip I'm putting my brandies and cordials aboard, I run up to Paris, or over to London. I visit the theatres, the galleries, the races. I see life. I mean that Dominique shall see it, too. And I've paid particular attention

to Spain, 'as I sailed, as I sailed.'" And Ladeuce hummed the old air, while he watched the Captain, who was busy at the table over his charts and compasses, and with great beads upon his forehead. "Naturally it interests a Cuban importer," and he laughed. "You have not been in Spain yourself? Then you don't remember the old gallows on the cliff where they hung a sailor for abducting the child of a hidalgo, as you sail into port at Rivarra?"

"What are you driving at, Ladeuce?" asked the Captain, feeling the sharp gaze overlay him.

"At nothing," laughed the other. "Have I so much artifice that you must look for second meanings in my words? I am but beguiling the time for you in my poor way till Dominique shall come again. Do you dislike to hear of Spain? You are in a fair way to hear a good deal of her from my lips. I love the land. She is the mother of our fortunes. I hope some time to leave this business which, if it keep your blood stirring with its excitements, has dangers in it — dangers in it, — and spend much time there. More than one night off duty have I managed to sleep in her old palaces on

this pretext or the other. It is contact with those dons that has polished off my manners so, perhaps. And then, on the whole, it is pleasanter walking in Spain than in countries where one feels the rope dragging from one's neck impede the gait. To be sure, one is really safe anywhere unless denounced — unless denounced. But how is one to know at what moment an enemy may be upon him? Do you think I mean that I am your enemy, Captain?" said Ladeuce, in his silkiest tone. "On the contrary, on the contrary, you never had a better friend, unless you thwart my purposes."

It was in this fashion that Ladeuce beguiled the time till Dominique should come again.

## IX.

It was wintry weather when Dominique returned full of the life of his classes. "It's no wonder Gascoygne is the man he is," he said. "I ought to have been in them long ago. And if it was n't that I want you for a sheet-anchor here you should have been with me, too, father. What times we should have had spelling over those things together!"

"Ah, you've gone beyond me now, Dominique, I fear. But I've not wasted all my time; I've found a new arenaria, — very interesting."

"You must tell me about it. And it's good you have the Lieutenant with you, anyway," said Dominique, measuring the pale old man with a tender glance. "I thought of it often when away. If you had not I should have wanted you to close the Lonely Beach and go over to Adelaide's." And then the young autocrat was in the saddle and galloping on the way to Adelaide's himself, Ladeuce beside him.

Adelaide came swiftly down the hall to meet him, with her usual wont. She had a pot of red roses in her hand. As the sunlight fell on her through the jewelled glass of the hall skylight she was a radiant object, with her gleaming eyes and smile. Dominique's heart bounded to see how beautiful she was.

"What shall I do?" she cried gayly. "And both my hands full." And in another moment the roses would have gone had not Ladeuce thrust himself forward.

"I, at least," he said, "must have the roses, if he is to have the hand;" and Adelaide drew back involuntarily. "You will not let me relieve you of such impedimenta?" he said. And there was for a minute some awkwardness in her endeavor to avoid his touch as his hands replaced her own on the little blue jar, which fell and broke into fragments. In that minute Mrs. Stuart and Miss Grey had come to greet Dominique, and had drawn him into the blue morning-room where Gascoygne, whose practice was not yet imperative, had been puzzling with Miss Grey over the notation of a piece of ancient music. But seeing, from where

he sat, Adelaide's heightened color, Gascoygne hurried into the hall, to find that she had cut her finger with an edge of the glazed ware; and, while some one obeyed her call to sweep up the bits, he bound her finger with the aid of his pocket-case, and came back with a red rose from the ruins in his buttonhole, while Adelaide ran up-stairs to repair her toilet.

If she would have gone to Dominique when she came down, she was hindered by seeing him sit there with Ladeuce's arm about his shoulder, as he detailed some affair of his student-life to Miss Grey; and she went instead and looked over the shoulder of Gascoygne, who had returned to the old music-written parchment. "I can't tell what I am going to do," she said in a low tone to Gascoygne, "if that man persists in coming here. It is out of my power to be friendly; and I hate to speak of his behavior to Allia or mamma, for the dear old Captain's sake. And oh, I hate to see him so with Dominique!"

"Why not speak of it to Dominique?" said Gascoygne. "I had intended to."

"Of his father's friend! I could n't. But it

is disturbing to see him about Dominique," she repeated.

"I am afraid," said a soft voice behind them, "that you will have to endure it." And they turned to encounter Ladeuce, who had left the others and gone into the hall for a bit of rough rose-pink coral that he had brought for Allia, and now stood in the shadow of the *portière* at the other door. It was just as he spoke that Dominique left Miss Grey and approached Adelaide, who, half turned to stone by the incident, was unable to reply a syllable to the gay bright words addressed her.

"What has happened to you, Adelaide?" said Dominique. "What —"

At that moment Allia came dancing into the room, reminding one both of the pet leopard some Roman lady may have had, and of the broken bits of sunlight that children flash about from mirrors. "Where is Dominique?" she cried. "How glad we are to see you back! And did you bring Mr. Ladeuce over? I want to thank him for the coral. Oh, Mr. Ladeuce, was it you that just sent it up to me? There's nothing

like it in all Coastcliff. I suppose Adelaide will be wanting it to make this blue and white room look more like a piece of china than ever. But I shall have it cut up into a necklace. How many creatures have worked how many years, Miss Grey, to make those beads for me?"

As they rode down the hill, Dominique turned to Ladeuce. "I wonder if it is I that have changed?" he said. "Certainly this is not the same place I left—"

"The same with a difference," said Ladeuce. "The difference that your friend Gascoygne has been poaching on your preserves."

They rode on in silence, Dominique of a sudden full of strange thoughts, his chin upon his breast, and as the Captain, shut up with a lame foot, saw the two come riding on together, badly as he had held himself to be abused by fate when alone with his lieutenant, he felt willing to spend the balance of his life alone with him in a dungeon, provided he could thus keep the man away from Dominique.

But there was no such thing as keeping him away from Dominique. He must out and tramp with him across the frozen meadows, he must

over to the yards and see about the boat building there for him, he must be telling him by the fireside strange stories of a life and adventure far outside his skies, he must join him in his visits to the Stuarts, where Dominique had already found him established on easy terms. For Mrs. Stuart's strong point was her confidence in humanity; and having admitted Captain Dacre to the fulness of friendship, a castaway, of whom she knew nothing, she would not have entertained an idea of different treatment of his guest. As for Miss Grey, ignorant of all but her books, she regarded Ladeuce as one regards a new specimen, and in what slight measure he entered her thoughts it was only to be labelled and classified. Adelaide, indeed, had little to say to him; nothing, in fact, since, meeting him in the lower fishing-town by twilight, she had experienced from him, before he recognized her proud carriage, the same impertinence with which he had been cajoling a group of bare-legged fisher-girls, and had passed without appearing to observe him, not confiding the incident to Gascoygne till it was too late for him to take notice of it. It was Allia

who made the man most welcome. Reared in a seclusion foreign to her inclinations, his experience was like the gateway of the world, his flatteries were the homage that was her due, and his small curios, which her cousin might have seen no harm in her accepting, had she known of all of them, satisfied her sense of accumulation, and fed her love of luxury with ideas of a luxury beyond her.

All this seemed well enough to Dominique. The Lieutenant was his father's friend, and a very fascinating man besides. He had seen the world. How was Dominique to know of the storm of sorrow and shame raging in the breast of the Captain at the impossibility of doing anything else than connive at the introduction of this contrabandista into a gentle family? — the Captain, who in his youth had drifted into a bad business incidentally, had pursued it thoughtlessly, had abandoned it eagerly, had repented it bitterly.

What did not seem so well to Dominique was this frozen manner of Adelaide's that had grown up since his departure, and was entirely new to him, that he did not once associate with repulsion from

Ladeuce, that after a half-dozen more experiences of it, Ladeuce having lit the darkness by a flash, meant to his excited fears that Gascoygne and she were about to enter a charmed world together and leave him, like a moth, to flutter round the lighted window of their happiness.

He had been so full of the joy of life that he had hardly stopped to name his perceptions. Yet the thought that Adelaide should be a part of any one but himself struck him like a blow of cold, sharp steel. He went about suffering with his wound, unaware that his own manner reacted on hers and made other demeanor difficult to her. But whatever it all meant, and however it all came about, it served to throw Dominique back upon Ladeuce. Let the happy people on the hill alone; they were of a different race from him, a vagabond of the water world; he would stay with his kind. It was his first experience of trouble, and it went hard with him. If this was all there was of life, was it worth while to have it? He had no anger with Gascoygne; Gascoygne deserved all the happiness there was in the world, only he could not stand by and see him enjoy it.

It all fitted admirably with the ideas of Ladeuce, however. "A very suitable arrangement, that of your friend Gascoygne and the girl Adelaide," he said. "The young man will settle to a good country doctor's practice, and his wife will keep his dinners hot for him. As for you," said Ladeuce, "you have to see the world."

## X.

It was not much of the world that Dominique saw in the next week. He stayed at home with his father, he walked the beach with Ladeuce, listening to the man's strange stories that breathed in his ear a sort of forbidden music. He did not go at all to the cottage on the hill, where he had been wont to present himself every morning. The consequence was that, after some days, the sleigh came over with Adelaide and her mother, Allia and Gascoygne. "I suppose I must put up with the man," Adelaide had said to Gascoygne. "I can't let the Captain slip out of our lives in this way, and he suffering with his foot. And if we don't go to-day, I don't know when we can. Mamma has a meeting to-morrow, and there is snow all along the sea that will be driving in by night."

The snow was driving in before night; but Ladeuce being absent in the town they had such a

delightful, old-time day that there was no resisting the Captain's urgency that they should stay and dine, and brighten the gloom of the increasing storm which their fine spirits hardly let them heed till the sudden twilight fell like a pall. When the Lieutenant came in he was shaggy with the snow, and reported the weather all he could make way against.

Gascoygne went out to the stables at once. "We have been foolish to stay," he said with vexation, as he returned. "But it is of no use to fret now. If we attempt to get back we shall be snowed in half-way, where it would be impossible either to go or come. The storms in this bay are as swift as typhoons. We shall have to claim your hospitality, Captain Dacre, for the night."

And there was never man more delighted than Captain Dacre to afford it. It gave him something of his former peace to have these familiar friends about him so again. It seemed to him, every time he looked at Adelaide's sweet face in the flowers with which he kept the great glass recess filled, or by the firelight of his hearth, while

the storm roared on outside, as if possibly he might overcome his evil genius, after all.

Dominique went hesitatingly and sat by Adelaide. Mrs. Stuart bustled about with the man and maid making arrangements, the white hand with its ruby as busy as a witch in the gale. Gascoygne walked up and down, looking out every few turns at the storm. The wind wailed about the house; they could hear the scream of the breaker and its thunderous pounding on the beach below the long slope, the hiss of the flying spray that almost swept the windows, the far, wide booming of sea beyond sea; but the early darkness was black and impenetrable except where the snow whirled and fled by like sparks of fire. The Captain sat quietly on the opposite side of the hearth, that faint ray of old content upon his face. "The storm outside," he said, "makes our safety and warmth inside so much safer and warmer. The darkness makes our fire so much ruddier."

"These storms," said Dominique, "follow the inner storms with a strange attraction. When I am at unrest I like to be out in them, as if I belonged to the weather."

"You are not at unrest now then," said Adelaide, with her calm smile.

"No," he said. "I should like everything to pause forever just here."

"The storms are like a great story to me," said the Captain. "I always think of the latitudes one has travelled over to get here; the palms it uprooted before it twisted these oaks; the heated air that rose over the hot-water regions for cooler air to rush in and take its place, ploughing down the Gulf, rushing from the Carolinas and making the gale off Hatteras, whistling into the vacant space from Delaware and Chesapeake till the tempest works havoc on the Eastern Shore, then room for the cold blast from the Canadas to sing in, till we have the northeaster roaring the whole length of the coast against the wind, and growing fiercer every moment of the fight. Eh?"

"Yes," said Dominique, "and there comes to be then a personality about a storm, as if it had a supernatural life of its own — were a great elementary agency; and it makes your heart beat when you think that you, that any man with a rope and stick, can face it and master it, as a thou-

sand little coasters are doing now — only give them sea-room."

"It might make your heart beat in a different fashion," said Ladeuce, "if you had seen some of the tempests that Dacre and I have tussled with down in the hurricane region. Do you call to mind one, my Captain, when we brought up a drowning woman and child from the wreckage floating by us? There were a thousand furies abroad that night. It makes you pale to think of it, I see. Tush, tush, it's over now, and I've seen almost as bad a one conjured up by a Fantee on a West Indian reef with the bead I just gave Miss Allia, — a little Voodoo devil, I think it is."

"You don't mean so!" exclaimed Allia.

"I don't mean that it is a little Voodoo devil, or I don't mean that I have seen the storm? There is no accounting for these Obeah mysteries; you can show this bead to any black in the tropics and he will fall to trembling — "

"I rather think," laughed Allia, "I had better not wear it."

"Why, the very man who gave it to me — he was a slaver — "

"A slaver!" cried Adelaide forgetfully. "And you know such men!"

"One falls in with everybody in beating about the world."

"Enough, Ladeuce!" said the Captain with sudden roughness. "Enough!"

"You see the power of the little fetich for yourself," said the man again, after his sharp glance and laugh. "What a storm it is beginning to arouse in Miss Allia and the Captain! If she threw it in the fire I've no doubt you would see a flame flash up the chimney, with a black devil a-top of it, that would make your hair stand on end. Oh, yes, I have fallen in with slavers, Miss Adelaide. And there might be worse men."

"Never!" cried Adelaide.

"Never?"

"I should think it would be about impossible," said Dominique, poking the fire.

"Prejudice! I have been entertained on board their craft and — "

"What!" exclaimed Adelaide again. "You have broken the bread of such creatures!"

"A cosmopolitan takes the world as he finds it. You would not break their bread?"

"Oh no!" she cried, with her face white and her eyes glowing, as if feeling herself degraded by the address of one who would. "I should die with the first morsel! I should hope to, indeed! The bread of barterers in flesh and blood —"

"You meet every day, and with no shrinking, some man who sells rum or opium, who barters in souls, who makes widows and orphans. Now you know nothing about it," he said, modulating his tones. "The slaver follows his business with no more idea of wrong than the men in your bay have when they come in with a cargo of herring —"

"Nonsense, Lieutenant," said Dominique. "There you go too far. Men cannot traffic in flesh and blood and not know it. Men cannot dip their hands into the horrors of the middle passage, cannot pursue the vilest, most loathsome business in life, and not be corrupted. Faugh! I agree with Adelaide. I would as soon touch the hand of a leper!"

Ladeuce laughed again. "How impetuous you

are! You go off half cocked — Ah! What is this, my Captain? You are the color of palm oil and ivory!" And they all started to see the Captain bending over the fire, pale as clay and muttering to himself.

"It revolts him," said Ladeuce. "He has sensibilities."

"Let me alone," said the Captain hoarsely. And only Ladeuce guessed with what difficulty that backward motion of the uplifted hand was kept from hitting the face above him and cutting the smooth lips against the teeth.

Dominique came quickly to his father with a glass of wine. "You have taken a cold," he said. "We will all have champagne with you. The Lieutenant has taught us drinking habits. We will have a little concrete summer to drown out this bitter winter. Are you all right now? I am glad Gascoygne is here. You are not going to be ill? I never saw you really ill."

"I am all right," said the Captain, with shaking lips. "Let me be — let me be. A sudden chill. My foot. If I snatch a minute's sleep you will pardon me, Mrs. Stuart?" And Mrs. Stuart had

hurried for a cushion, and Adelaide, springing to her feet, had already brought a sofa blanket and had sat down on a low hassock at his side, holding his hand, that had a strange thrill in it. "Now sleep," she said, "and we will talk as if you were miles away. Do you want me to sing to you first?" And she loosened the roses from her breast and pinned them on his coat, and, taking his hand again in hers, sang the old Scotch songs he liked so well that she had sung all the tune out of them for her own ears long ago. And only Dominique, who stood with his hand on his father's head, heard him murmuring, "Ah, it is too much, too much! All these innocent things."

"I heard that last air once on the Sierras," said Ladeuce gently, when she ceased, "as I came across. I had an errand into Catalonia, — a thread of romance I was following up. I shall always associate it, not with Scotch lads and lasses and the Castle o' Montgomerie, but with the old castle of the Marquises del Riviero, — the Marquis Angel del Riviero y Zumalaxericas, to give you the long and short of it. That is what the name of the Marquis in this generation

would be if he were in possession or were in existence. But they don't know where he is. They don't know where he is," repeated Ladeuce slowly. "I passed some nights once in the castle among its frowning mountains. I had access to family papers. And such estates as are his for the taking! Mines of cinnabar and coal, vineyards and wheat fields and cork forests in old Spain, sugar and coffee plantations in Porto Rico, and quarries of wonderful marbles in the Isla de Pinos — revenues of doubloons that have piled together year by year. There is no richer hidalgo in all the kingdom. And what blood flows in his veins! It is the blood of kings. Heroes lift their hands whenever he does. *Ojalá!* Some day the young Marquis will come to his own."

"The what?" asked Mrs. Stuart, who had been nodding herself.

"The Marquis Angel del Riviero y Zumalaxericas. Thanks. I like to roll the syllables."

"Is he young?" asked Allia.

"He ought to be just turned of twenty-one, if he is alive at all," said the *raconteur*. "And what a career waits for him! A dozen titles of his own,

— an old grandee of Spain. Jewels fit for crowns. Castles in the hills and summer palaces by the sea. Not a pleasure in Christendom but at his service. Not a princess in Europe but might take his hand. What *fiestas* he will have to remember — "

"'What nights we had in Egypt,'" said Dominique idly.

"And how do you know he will come to his own?" asked Allia.

"I don't believe he can stay away," said Ladeuce, lifting his eyebrows. "Probably kept in ignorance by those that mean well; but murder will out, you know. He will learn to love luxury — he will gravitate to his own."

"If it is his own, I hope so."

"And there is something picturesque, is there not," said Mrs. Stuart, "about such rank and wealth and all its appanage — old halls your fathers trod, old banners they bore to battle — "

"And old gold they did n't spend. For my part, I only wish I were twenty years younger and able to prove myself the Marquis Angel del Riviero y Zumalaxericas."

"And for my part," said Dominique, "I am content as I am, and only wish this evening were to last a hundred years. You may be your Marquis of Carabas and welcome, Lieutenant. I had much rather be the son of an old sea captain, sitting here and hearing the storm and the sea tear up and down the beach in these great organ tones. I think you will have to stay here a week at least, Adelaide."

"I think we will all go to bed," said the Captain, staggering to his feet. "This gale takes the vitality out of us."

But after they had gone to their rooms, long unoccupied, although rude comfort had been improvised there, Dominique lingered in the low glow cast by the fire through the place, lost in revery. What had so suddenly changed his wintry atmosphere till it was warm and sweet as the breath of the old lemon-tree, of the oleander and jasmine, stealing towards him from the recess? He did not know that Adelaide's own spirit had risen, as if from the body of death, in the absence all day of that gaze which sometimes hovered over her like a carrion-crow over its

prey. He only knew that the sun had come out across what had seemed a gray waste; that he saw the way plain before him to Adelaide; that, if he should die to-night, life would have repaid him for all, since he had found what he thought destroyed. Did he not feel now, hours afterward, the beating of her heart when, the music-box still singing out its tune, he had thrown his arm about her and waltzed down the cold stone hall on the way to dinner? Did he not still thrill with that touch of her fragrant hair as he did then? Did he not remember the tender bloom in her great sea-blue eyes, the tremor in her hand as she reached it up to him when he sat on the arm of his father's chair saying he wished the evening were to last a hundred years? He reproached himself for the happy moments he had lost — lost? Not lost if they changed that amorphous affection of hers into the crystallic force of a passion! Before she slept that night, Adelaide heard his voice rising through the house, on the sub-bass of the long roll of the sea up the coast, in a song where every now and then the music broke into her name like the foam-crest of a passionate wave, with its

burden of devotion and despair, — a burden which might have been the heritage of some wasted life, long since forgotten, waking and singing it out within him, which could have been no fear now, or sorrow of his own. For in Dominique's heart, this night, nothing but a wild new hope, as much like joy as hope, was fluttering and beating its wings, ready to spring into limitless heaven.

The storm had blown out its fury when they rose in the morning. The sun shone in an azure heaven where the wind huddled a white flock of clouds before it; the sea was swinging in huge sapphire rollers, and throwing a spray of frozen spume far up the beach and the long slope below the windows; the old plum orchard and the twisted oaks glittered in crystal; the world was white far back over the meadows, and the farmers with their steaming oxen were breaking out the roads, which they had grown into the habit of doing for the Captain, who had not only become the friend of each one among them, but who was so important an aid in the matter of their taxes. The harnesses were lengthened with straps from the Captain's team, the horses were put in tandem,

the better to tread the narrow road, the merry party went out into the peaceful world of snow and sun, the horses floundering and plunging, the sleigh tipping, the drifts powdering about them, but Dominique riding the thill-horse and taking them safely through, his satchel under their seats, on the way back with him to his classes.

"Dominique," his father had said to him when alone, on the morning he started, "you pleased me last night when they talked and thought me sleeping. You showed you despised wealth. Have you ever considered that there is something less noble than work, in living on another's earnings, in living even on your own earnings of the past, while you have life and health and strength? What if we gave what we have to those that need it more, and started freshly in life, you and I? There are not two better mariners afloat than we, and I have furbished up all I ever knew and spent nights in studying the new charts. If we kept enough to buy a coaster to begin with, we could pay for it from our earnings, presently, in carrying deals or coal or fish, or running packet. What do you think of it?"

"I think you are a little beside yourself," said Dominique gayly, "with last night's pleasure. And I think, moreover, that you had better come up to me as soon as I am settled and have a go at my mathematics."

## XI.

It was not Captain Dacre that went up to Dominique. It was Ladeuce, who, bidding the Captain good-by for a while, installed himself in lodgings at Dominique's elbow and began to make himself indispensable, not all at once, but by degrees, not to the young man's mathematics, but to his pleasures. And why not? Why should Dominique distrust his father's friend? Why should he stop to think twice of the right or wrong of a thing with him? Theatres? Oh, he had always gone to the theatre. But behind the scenes — that was a new world. That was to be a man about town. And behind the scenes at a ballet — ah! here life began. Wines? horses? play? sumptuous dinners with good comrades? Now things went more swiftly. Splendor? spendthriftry? Ladeuce paid the bills. Were not things always within bounds? Was there not a certain elegance about it all? Did Ladeuce suffer degeneration into vulgarity in

his lessons in the love of luxury? The man was charming, the pleasures were alluring, young blood is hot; and in Dominique's blood, with its tropic currents, with what answered for the milk of the old Roman wolf, to dream was to do, to wish was to possess. His swift senses swept him away on the eddy into the vortex before he knew his foot was wet. The love of Adelaide? Adelaide would be there still when he went back to her, and was he going to be a poltroon and hesitate about seeing life for the sake of any lily-livered girl? His father — If all Ladeuce hinted were true, his father had seen life long ago, and would know it was but passing through an experience of his own. His letters home had never been frequent; why should they be more so now, since neither asymptote nor hyperbola, straight-flush nor ante, would particularly please the readers? And as for the sequel — but why follow him? One day it would all be a bad, a hideous dream and delirium. Just now it was a wild and reckless career of — Those who loved Dominique would not have wished to call it sin, and, every night's madness followed by every morning's remorse, how could they call it pleasure?

There were throughout this period some vacations at home, where the old Captain, relieved from his incubus, followed his simple interests in his laboratory and among his flowers, with his one day and night weekly at the cottage on the hill, thoughtless of the possibility of those experiences that caused the name of Ladeuce to be unmentioned by his son. Only to Adelaide's eyes was change apparent. She knew by subtile instincts, whose whispers cannot be muffled, that it was another in Galahad's armor; and as she looked for his coming over the sea or over the land, from her flower-hung window on the hill, her heart was often sore with its suspense and sorrow.

The Captain was paying his weekly visit on the hill, one autumn afternoon, when all things were rich in that sweet decay of sodden leaf and golden haze with which the dead year rises and simulates a mockery of summer for a while. The yellow leaves of the vine about the casement flickered in the last sunbeam, but, within the room, it was already twilight, twilight so dim and deep in the corners that it was no wonder some one, coming in, should stumble over an unseen footstool and fall

upon a lounge. "It is all right," said Dominique. "'Where he fell, there he lay.' I wonder if Sisera had had a champagne breakfast before he fell —"

"Is that you, Dominique?" asked Captain Dacre. "Why, where did you come from?"

"Came from the table an hour ago or so. We've been celebrating the day. No day in particular; just this day; any day; the day on which we find ourselves alive and radiant with health."

"What nonsense you are talking, Dominique!" said Allia.

"Very far from nonsense," said Mrs. Stuart, with her usual sublime oblivion of facts. "Any day or every day is a day on which to be thankful under all circumstances."

"So," continued Dominique, "I thought I would put the benediction on by coming down here. Where is Adelaide?"

"I am here," said Adelaide, without moving.

"Sweet and cold. But it sounds like a bird singing in the dark, that voice. Do you remember, father, that bird in the night in the Southern forests, with the voice like a tolling bell? You

don't like to talk of the Southern forests? And there are pleasanter things than the voices that sound like tolling bells, — the still small voice, for instance. Fate will always overtake you," cried Dominique. "Sometimes in disaster, sometimes in self-accusation, sometimes in the voice of the woman you love. This fate that people call providence, and that is only the attraction of cohesion and gravitation, the setting of crystals, the moving of particles into place, wrong righting wrong as two negatives make the affirmative, fate that follows poison with death and death with hell — "

"Dominique, what are you talking about!"

"Of 'fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,'" said Dominique lightly. "This fate that you believe lies in wait for us, as much as I do, — this vengeance that overtakes the broken law — "

"Sometimes I am afraid I do," said the Captain, leaning forward with his chin upon his cane. "But it's a sad thought. I banish it. Those that have sinned, fear — "

"It is an irreligious thought," said Miss Grey. "It does away with the over-ruling hand."

"Yet had I never seen the thing," said the Captain, "never seen the vengeance fall like a bolt upon the lightning — "

"How is that?" said Dominique.

"Oh, years ago. A mere matter of my experience."

"Make it a matter of ours."

"It 's but a trifle, although it had effect upon me. No, no! not a trifle!" he exclaimed then suddenly with the thought of it. "It was a shock, a blow, a terrible hurt. Let me tell you. I was exploring for parties who had projects concerning a canal between the two oceans, — I and three others, I carrying, as it chanced, a good sum of money not belonging to me. One night I woke, as you will sometimes when evil things cross your line of life, in a wet chill; and I found myself, except for my Indian boy, alone in the forest. My three companions had fled, and they had taken the boat with them, and they had taken that money. My blood was cold, and my heart stood still. Robbed of trust-money, — and nobody would believe the story. It was absolute ruin, I just beginning life. I would rather have

died. I lay on my face and wished I had died, and life was strong in me, before I joined myself to those men, — men whom I had chosen, and whose fortunes I would have made. And, thinking of their treachery, my heart began to beat again, beat like a cannonading in my ears, and my blood to surge over me in hot, tingling flashes. I must follow them. I must find them. I woke Sanchicho, and fired him with my own fury belike, and we plunged on our way towards a spot where he thought we might find a canoe. I remember now that all around us in the moonlight lay some strange old ruins, the remnant of a city, may be, whose people had blown to dust ages gone, — a mighty staircase that led the way to some altar just underneath the stars, a tower, a doorway, half guessed in the wild growth that had taken possession of them, the fig and caper growing from the clefts, the cactus uncouth as idols, and all like the phantom of a place, a nightmare dream of ruins rather than ruins indeed. But, although we sheltered ourselves in a vacant chamber from the tempest that burst before morning with wind and rain, I did not look twice at it

then. I was ruined; my good name was gone; I must be after it. As well chase a bubble on the Chagres River! By noon the third day we found a boat at the camp of some mahogany cutters, and, Sanchicho steering, we fled along. There was a freshet in the river from the rains of the swift night-storm; the current was tremendous, and carried us between mountain-walls and under forest-tangles, as it carried all the drift it brought down, rafts of boughs and underbrush knotted with vines growing and blossoming, here a macaw still on her nest in the hollow stem, or here a frightened marmoset. We penetrated a cañon, where a mountain had been split to let the river through. The rock went up into the mid-sky, sheer precipice on either side; the water slipped on like oil, still, black, awful. Just before us, and just over the water, all the way, fluttered a fleet of butterflies, silver-blue and rose and olive, a swarm of them like flying flowers. There were some rapids. And all at once we were out in a broad bay of the river under the noon sky, among palms feathering off in sunshine, along the shore, above the wild citron-trees and

thickets of blue and scarlet passion-flowers, birds flashing like flames between blossoms that looked like birds themselves, sweet scents floating from every leaf, parrots and monkeys chattering on the boughs, snakes twining and glittering in the sun like a mailed work of jewels, and the water an enamel of blue and silver, such overflowing life and beauty as if the Maker of it had given way to sun and earth and water to see what they could do. In the vast sky above a buzzard floated with his balanced wings in that flight finer than that of any other bird of the air, as if he were a part of the great motionless heaven. And suddenly an eddy snatched the boat and swirled us up against a huge uprooted ceiba-tree floating down the stream, its branches half veiled with the black funereal moss that trailed after it through the water, and twisted in and out with the white flowers of the vanilla vine. Scared by our coming, three filthy buzzards rose into the air. And I saw then the sight that curdled my blood as never before. They rose from three corpses, — three corpses caught in the branches, stripped and torn and reeking in the sun. The bolt had

fallen with the lightning. They were the corpses of the men that robbed me."

"And did you get your money back?" asked Allia presently, as the Captain, still shuddering with the memory, paused.

"Oh, no. And I was reckless. I never went back myself till I had made the money in other ways, and paid the last real of it. Do you think I would not have paid that money? Not if I had had to sell my soul for it — as it may be I did," the Captain added half under his breath.

Perhaps Adelaide heard him, though, for she put out her hand and let it rest a moment on his where they clasped the cane, — her hand that was not trembling simply because the Captain had endeavored to divert attention from Dominique.

"It was an experience, indeed," said Miss Grey. "And what opportunity for study of fauna and flora, if you had taken advantage of it. It is a pity, certainly, that you made no more note of those ruins that moonlight night. Very probably the ruins that are searched for now—"

"The mystery of reverend eld searched by babes!" cried Dominique. "I have been talking

of joining a party in the search myself. Odd if I should be treading your old hunting-ground, father. The thought of it stirs my heart as if I were the child of some of those early Spanish conquistadores, and had their blood beating out their old sensations in my veins, —

'Cortes and his men
Silent upon a peak of Darien.'

I know just how it seemed to them when first they saw those ruins, overgrown then for ages, lifting those altars built on flames, those statues gigantic and grotesque, those vast communal chambers, into the breathless blaze of that burning blue. It could not have seemed to them that they were on this planet, with the pleasant Spanish land behind them, the Moorish arch and fountain; they were in the bright and dark spots of the moon itself. And what race of giants was this that could build and disappear and leave intact, with their kinsfolk of the *casas grandes* up in the wild Apache country, with their kinsfolk down in the old paved roads that run across the South Sea Islands and that no man built, with the tracks they left of a civilization

whose aims, I fancy, were as much more than ours as the stars are more than star-dust, — a civilization in which there were no rich, no poor, no laws that let one man build his happy fortunes on the shoulders of the hapless million, that make the condition of crime and then punish the crime; but where the common interest made community, and every man was king and every man was commoner!"

"Pretty civilization that, Dominique!" said his father. "A dead level of mediocrity. I don't wonder there are none of them left. Such a race would wither of too much sunshine, like grass on the steppes. You want your big stems for shade and shelter to the undergrowth that will bring up big stems in its turn. A civilization of equality is not only government by the mob, but it is the creation of dwarfs. You want great men, men of original conception, of enterprises, of achievement, to span rivers, to develop continents, to undermine oceans, to finish the earth; men of individual wealth to show what can be done with wealth, to bring art to its glory, to make life endurable to those that have not the force to

make it so for themselves, for there will always be the weak stems. You want men to rule, and men to obey; the most of us are only made to obey —"

"I deny it!" cried Dominique. "All that comes from the religious system, this worship of colossal superiority on a throne that gives prestige to all other thrones. These gods, these entities, are great to us because we look up to them from our knees. Let us rise! *We* are the gods, and there are no other!"

"Dominique!" cried Miss Grey.

"He loves to hear himself talk," said the Captain. "Some time he will see that the universe is governed, will see the glory of leadership, the virtue of loyalty. Community and equality are pretty terms of poetry, but power is poetry itself. A man of power is a vicegerent of the law by which the stars move in their courses. A man of power, even of irresponsible power —"

"Nero, for instance," said Allia, who loved a little mischief.

"Nero!" cried Dominique, rising on one arm, in another outburst of that groundless enthu-

siasm which walks the earth without touching it. "Nero! I suppose you mention his name as a reproach to power. The man who wears a crown of thorns through history, the great imperial martyr, libelled and slandered and outraged, 'the focal point of million-fingered scorn.' Perhaps he had the vices of his time, but who else rose above the level of that time with his greatness, his ideas, his energies? The fact is, he was a Greek by nature; art appealed to him, music, painting, the drama. The old Roman was in antagonism to all that, and hated him for it. When they reviled him for inventing his hydraulic organ, for singing to his lyre, they forgot how the king's messengers, seeking Achilles,

> 'Found him set,
> Delighted with his solemn harp, which curiously was fret
> With works conceited through the verge; the bawdrick that embraced
> His lofty neck was silver twist; this, when his hand laid waste
> Aëtion's city, he did choose as his especial prize,
> And, loving sacred music well, made it his exercise!

Well, the Greeks themselves did not revile him. The cities of Greece sent him the victor's crown for minstrelsy and song. And then what

a creature of splendor he was! When he travelled, it was with a thousand baggage-wagons, his mules shod in silver, and the African slaves, their drivers, clad in scarlet and bound with bracelets of gold. Yes, he had ideas. He established the national theatre that the magistrate might not ruin himself for the people's pleasure; he declared Greece a free country; he projected the canal between the Ionian and Ægean shores; he found Rome a city of alleys and wooden hovels, so to say, and he left it with broad thoroughfares, gardens, and palaces. Granting he did fire Rome? It was but to rebuild it as became Rome. He played on his lyre while it was burning? What else should he have done? Run with the machine? I notice that he opened his own imperial gardens to the houseless, that he lost his own palace, that he paid from his own purse for porticos to the new dwellings, for a clear space of ground round every house, that he gave rewards in order to hurry the work of reconstruction, that he built on stone arches to do away with the use of wood, that he led private springs into a public channel for a reservoir in case of fire again. Did

he burn the city for the sake of spending that treasure? But he did worse than fire Rome, he polluted the head-waters of the Martian aqueduct. Ah, what a wretch was that, to take a bath in a frolic! Did he have Agrippina, his vile mother, killed? And none too soon, if he did. But Brutus had his two sons killed, and you make a demigod of Brutus. Yet, when Nero's little daughter was born, his happiness was beyond all mortal joy; his sorrow was as great when she died. It was a servile senate, not he, that translated her to the stars. He persecuted the Christians, as Paul did when he was Saul, because he thought it right to persecute Christians. The Christians have persecuted him ever since. And who tells all these iniquities of him? A hard old Roman called Tacitus, who says of these same Christians, that they were 'a band of men detested for their evil practices;' and one story may be as true as the other. 'My friends desert me,' he cried when he came to die, 'and I cannot find an enemy!' And he was nothing but a boy, when all is said. Gossip and slander have ruled the world from of old. O Fame, you fickle jade! O History, you lying tongue! You

never did fouler wrong than when you painted Nero, the child of art and song and splendor, as a monster!" And all at once Dominique rose to his feet and rushed from the room.

"What an excitable boy!" said Mrs. Stuart. "He is always so full of his fancies."

"But he builds on such reprehensible premises," said Miss Grey. "It is surely the result of no teaching of mine."

Neither Miss Grey nor Mrs. Stuart saw that, although with no unsteadiness of gait, yet he walked on tiptoe. But Adelaide saw it, as she sat with her head downcast and her heart fluttering like a leaf in her stone-cold breast. And Captain Dacre rose with some hurry in his old-fashioned and rather stately adieux, and hastened after his son.

> "'I am na fou, I 'm na that fou,
> But just a wee drap in my ee,'"

sang Allia. "Very well," she said in an undertone. "If it was the Lieutenant, just a little exalted, behaving in that style and talking in that style, I never should hear the last of it. There would n't be enough to say about it."

"Are n't you fond of Dominique, Allia?" asked Adelaide.

"Of course I am. But —"

"Those that we are fond of we must take as they are, and make the most of them. The leopard cannot change his spots. At any rate, we cannot say that Dominique has practised a deceit upon us. We accept him with our eyes open — oh, we have no choice about it, he is a part of our lives! And, Allia, you see he needs us all the more."

It was one fresh spring morning, when all the air was sweet with growing grass, with budding branches, and with the clean and wholesome scent of upturned furrows, when bees were humming and birds were twittering, and the world seemed as if it might be such a pleasant world, other things agreeing, that Adelaide saw Dominique's boat flying over the water on its sail. She had not known he was at home again, and she caught up her hat and shawl and ran down through the terraces of the garden to meet him on the shore.

He leaped out, as the prow ran up the pebbles, only to take her hand and half draw, half lift her into the boat. Then he sprang in again, pushed

off with an oar and trimmed his sail, and they were sweeping away before the gentle land-breeze, bowing and dipping from one soft long swell to the next, till only the salt breath of the outer sea blew about them, and the land was far behind, before he spoke again after his first glad cry of "Adelaide!"

"Well, Dominique," she said at last, tired of waiting, "is it some trouble? Am I to help you? Can I? Have you come to tell me?"

"Wait! wait!" he cried. "You will hear it soon enough — soon enough!" And on they sailed.

"It pains you so, let me have my half of it," she urged again with the smile which was only like pale sunshine over rain.

"O my God!" he answered her then. "You shall have it. I will not spare you pain. I am disgraced! I am expelled from my class in dishonor! I have my choice to leave, or to be thrust out and the tale of my misdeeds laid before my father! And I cannot bear it. I cannot face him. I cannot see him take his death-wound. I am going away. That will give him another thought.

I am going away; none will ever see me again till I can look them in the face!"

"You are going away!"

"Out into the outer world; to retrieve myself, Adelaide, or to die. When I come back it will be because I am sure of myself."

"O Dominique, that is no way! Stay here — stay with us!"

"Impossible. It is a terrible nightmare! I must wake from it; I must get so far away that I cannot dream the evil thing again. I must go. But, Adelaide, I must have one hope in the world, one anchor!" He looked at her with wild, eager, questioning eyes. Was he absolutely sure of this love that had never been spoken plainly between them, that had perhaps seemed to them too sacred to trifle with, too natural to doubt? Would she save him? Would she destroy him utterly? "Oh, how can I look in your dear sweet eyes," he cried, "when I cannot look in his? Adelaide, I must leave my wife behind me."

There was a moment's pause. "You will," said Adelaide then simply. "I am your wife for ever and ever."

"Ah, I know," he said impatiently. "But I am so vile myself I distrust everybody. I distrust you. I cannot tell what may happen. It must be my wife by law that I leave."

"Dominique!"

"Yes, Adelaide. And it is easy enough. The Cape is just under our lee. We will shape our course for that. We will find our license and a minister, and no one shall be the wiser till I come back to claim you."

"O Dominique! It is not to be thought of!"

"It is to be done!" he cried.

"Dominique, you would not care to come back to the woman who could marry you in secrecy and shadow."

"Care!"

"It is not right. I should be living a falsehood. I should be deceiving my mother and your father."

She was so heavenly in her grave and stately innocence, surveying him with the level gaze of her shining eye, the white sail behind her, the blue sky above her, ringed by the purple sea, so sweet, so pure, so lofty, his heart stood still to think he might possibly have lost this too.

"And if you do not," he avowed, "I shall not be living at all. Look how black the depths below us are! You will give me your promise here and now, or I will slip over the boat side and down into the deepest and blackest of them, and so end the whole matter. Quite likely the best ending it could have for you."

"O Dominique!" she cried, the tears starting; "I love you. I want you to be happy. But this will make me miserable."

"It is my province to make people miserable. You will be more so, perhaps, when the water rolls over me till the sea gives up its dead. And that, by Heaven, it shall do, unless I have your word!" And he waited, leaning forward, all determination, all tenderness, flaming from his dark eyes and pale face, the impersonation of impassioned splendor. "You have yielded," he said presently. "I see you have. O Adelaide, my darling, my darling, if there is any strength in me you shall be glad of it. And if there is none, why then — you and I were one when first we saw each other — our fates were cast together. It is not that I ask so much of you — we cannot help ourselves. And you

shall not be what I am, but I will mount to you."

An hour's swift, silent sailing, before they threaded the fleet of anchored fishing boats and touched the Cape. A hurried walk to the town hall for the license, Adelaide hesitating, tearful, voiceless. A search for the clergyman, that scorched her with a sort of shame. Then the brief service, as hurried a return to the boat, and the sail set for Coastcliff again.

"You are my wife," said Dominique, with something of the old spirit flashing up; "and them that God hath joined together let no man put asunder, nor no woman either. Don't think that I shall not come back to you, that you shall not be proud of me yet! When I am master of a Cunarder —"

"Are you going to sea, Dominique?"

"No matter where I am going."

"But I have a right to know, have I not?" she urged, the smile glancing on the tears.

"Well; the sea is a great country, and no man has a fee in it. There are things to do upon the sea just as much as on the land.

There are fame and fortune and service there, too.

> 'It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
> And see the great Achilles whom we knew,
> It may be that the gulfs will wash us down.'

You shall hear from me in ways that you will understand. As for you, I must take you on trust. I was wrong — I do believe in one thing yet. I believe in you, Adelaide."

The wind had changed and was coming briskly, as May winds will, a baffling wind that seemed to blow from all quarters before it blew out of the thunder-cloud; the sea was rising. Dominique had all he could do to manage the cockle-shell of a boat in the cross-seas; sunset heaped the thunder-clouds with flames before them and faded to a glow through which the stars were gleaming, ere they touched the place whence they had started. Tired and wet and hungry, but ignorant of any of it, they went up from the shore; and as they parted in the dark and dew, for one moment Dominique's arms were about his wife, and the first kiss of her lover's was her husband's.

## XII.

GASCOYGNE drove Adelaide over to the Lonely Beach.

"Take a furred wrap, Adelaide," said Mrs. Stuart. "This spring wind is too fresh."

"I will not let the wind visit her too roughly," said Gascoygne.

It looked lonelier than ever there as they drove up, with nothing but the snow bloom of the old plum orchard behind the house, like a flight of the breaker's foam, with the sunlight gilding the purple sweep of the farther sea, the beach grass just springing, and not a soul and not a sail in sight.

His man had brought the morning paper, and the Captain sat with it by the fire that seldom went out at the Lonely Beach, but he was not reading it. He roused himself at the sound of their footsteps and voices. An open letter had fallen beside him. "From Dominique," he said. "He

has told me of his failure. Ah, my God! I have nothing left to live for! And he has gone!"

"He will come back," said Adelaide.

"I don't know," said the Captain. "If he could go away. Why should he? What have I done to him that he should desert me? What is there for him to come back to?"

"His father," said Adelaide, kneeling beside his chair and putting her arms round the old man's neck, while Gascoygne picked up the paper and walked to the window. "And his wife."

"Adelaide!" springing up. "Has he added that to the rest?"

"Is it such an enormity?" she asked, forcing a smile for his sake.

"And when?" he gasped.

"We were married yesterday," she said. "No one is to know it but Gascoygne and yourself. Heaven overlook the hiding it from my good mother!" she exclaimed, turning impetuously to Gascoygne.

"But you know very well," answered Gascoygne, who always brought the comfort of an every-day view of things, "that my cousin could

never keep the secret alone. She would have to let all the ladies of the Confederated Charities help her." And then he left them together.

"That it should come in this way," cried the Captain, "the desire of my heart! I had no right to, but I dreamed it, I hoped for it. But not this way, not in the dark," he said, "not with my boy ruined, not wishing that I might have died before the day!"

"My father," said Adelaide then, "you have something more to live for now than you had before. You have your daughter."

"I don't deserve her — oh, I don't deserve her!" sobbed Captain Dacre, sinking into his chair again. "I have only brought the sweet thing trouble. Adelaide, my child, you must forgive me for the wrong I have done you — "

"Forgive you for giving me my husband!" she cried, standing before him in all the stature of a woman. "Don't think I value him less because he is not as strong as an archangel. If he were different he would not be Dominique. And it is Dominique that I love," she said, the blush kindling all her beauty freshly.

"My dear girl!"

"And as for you, you must come away from here. This loneliness is killing you. Gascoygne says there is nothing worse for the nerves. You must come over to the cottage and help us make cheer. He will come back. I have faith, I have perfect faith in Dominique."

"No," said Captain Dacre. "If he comes back, he will come back here. I will keep his home open and ready for him. You will be on the hill, I will be here. Only remember, Adelaide, it is your home here too, whenever you will." And then they went out to Gascoygne in the plum orchard, where the bluebirds were busy, and looked at the springing green things, whose seeds had come from the gardens of the Coastcliff cottage, and that by and by would be massed in splendid colors, walked down the turfy slope that it cost the Captain such pains to keep green and clear of the blowing sand, and paced to and fro by the margin, hiding their forebodings in happy plans for the future, till the horse came round. "Now, remember," said Adelaide, "I come over one day, and you return my visit the next of every day we live!"

"You have given him something else to think of," said Gascoygne, as they crossed the causeway. "And now, with his plants to watch between whiles, he will live on his hopes. Too stimulating diet, however, like too much ammonia for his flowers."

"I wonder why his flowers are of so much deeper color than ours," said Adelaide. "I suppose it is the salter air; although the Lieutenant said they drew their richness from the grave of some old buccaneer buried there at the foot of the orchard, he doubted. Do you recollect Allia's dancing there in the flowers and the sun last summer, as he was saying it? He shivered, and when you asked him why, gave a shrug and said — it was only the old woman's tale — some one was dancing on his grave. I would n't have thought it of the Lieutenant, would you?" said Adelaide, looking at Gascoygne. And the light in her glance and the laugh in her voice told how sure she was herself of Dominique's escape from the man's grasp.

## XIII.

It was a long month in that slow spring,— a long month without a word from Dominique. Adelaide, standing where the blush roses were now in bloom, had, on many an evening of it, looked out across the sea beneath, and wondered if she were the same girl who stood there once and said she hated death and would like this life to last forever. Now, opening her eyes on the morning light, that heavy load upon her heart, she had thought that an unending sleep would be better than her waking. And then one day had come a dateless telegram, without signature, from she knew not where: "The Poet's Book. Marked passage. Page three hundred and twenty-five." And she had hastened to take from the shelf the book they knew by that name, the old "Thousand Nights and One Night," that had once belonged to a poet, had been marked and re-marked by his hand, and had been sold with his library,—

a book over which they two had often lingered, for its flavor, fuller than any other of oriental life, for the palms and pomegranates and jasmines and quinces, among which, as they read, they could hear "the stream in murmuring ripple, and the birds confusedly warbling, and the wind with rustling gush tempering the world to quiet," for the music of its songs and the poetry of its pages. What memories the yellow-leaved book recalled; and Dominique must have known it would. This was the leaf they turned together as the book lay on the old blossoming stone-wall in the sun, and a bee walked across the page as if looking for its honey. On this was pictured the bride of flexile grace, in her gown of green, with whom Dominique had compared her as he read here and there skippingly, who "showed in her straightness the blade of standing wheat." Her hand trembled so that the book all but fell as she fluttered the pages for that passage which Dominique, in a fashion that he had, had from time to time taken down with others in his pocket note-book. "Five things," she read, "were at once heaped on him: love and beggary and hunger and nakedness and toil; and nev-

ertheless he straightened his soul to endure." And if the page was blistered with her uncontrollable tears, she also, because Dominique had done so, straightened her soul to endure. And then again there were months of silence, in which it seemed to her as if her heart and her hair should grow gray together, till, with the snow, came another message: "The same. Page two hundred and two." And when she had found this and read: —

> "Oh, thou art one whose pleasure, when 't is spoken,
> Makes the world dance and Fortune clap her hands,"

she understood, with but little thinking, that Dominique had fallen in with some portion of the good luck it would be her "pleasure" he should have, and a weight of anxious sorrow and yearning pity fell away from her sensations. She trusted Dominique's own nature for the rest, and waited.

She waited a long while. It was on the return of her wedding-day that a third message came, this time by cable: "Second Chronicles, ninth, twenty-first." Which, being interpreted, she found to read: "For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Huram: every three years came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold and

silver, ivory and apes and peacocks." This, then, told her all she ought to hope to know, perhaps. That he was enduring, that he had found good fortune, that he was following the sea on long voyages, that he was in port somewhere on the other hemisphere. Doubtless she could have traced his whereabouts; but what he did not choose to say she would not guess. The message meant a great deal more to her than many a longer one might. She knew that Dominique had called back, in indicating it, and wished her also to recall it, the happy autumn day when they read ancient history and puzzled over Tarshish, and he had drawn a long tress of her fallen fragrant hair across his lips, with a glance half timid, half defiant, and then a laugh that hid the passion of the kiss he gave it, while he held it up and apostrophized it:—

> "'And I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
> Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.'

Adelaide, how black your hair is! It is like the hair of those Arabian girls in our poet's book, that was so dark it made a glory of their brows. And then your eyes are so blue! To think this

hair is nothing but a thread of silk; but if I were as far away as a fixed star, it would have power to draw me back!" There had often been an echo of raillery in such by-play; now she might know how real it had been to him all the time.

She would have liked to keep this last message to herself awhile, if it had not been her wedding-day. As it was, she went over to find the Captain and a Bible and read it to him.

"Great heavens!" said the Captain. "Gold and ivory and apes! Is there a fate in it? Can't he escape it? Does he mean that he has gone into the slave trade?"

"I think you are possessed," said Adelaide. "Why must you needs imagine evil when he has told us that he straightened his soul to endure? He is on an Indiaman. When he commands her he will come to us. Then by his own efforts he will have retrieved himself. He is alive; he is doing well; I feel as if he were almost here. And I have brought this to show you, too. Gascoygne did it for me. Does it not startle you and fill your soul with joy?"

It was a likeness of Dominique, that she had

asked Gascoygne to make — his gift of portraiture answering for the first sketch, if no more. She had not known what it was she asked of him, nor what sacrificial fervor Gascoygne had struck into those lines that gave back the white light of the brow, the glow of the dark eyes, now so tender in their downcast gleam beneath long lashes like a girl's, now so ardent, the high beauty of the smile, the whole starry strength of the face. Perhaps Gascoygne gave to the thing some of the nobility of his own abnegation; there was no abnegation about Dominique, for had he known of Gascoygne's mind he would only have said, "I cannot give her up. You can. I love her best!"

But the Captain turned the picture on its face. "I must not let him beguile the good faith out of me with his eyes," he said. "You feel as though he were almost here? I don't know — I don't know," he said gloomily. "I only know this, Adelaide, that before he wins you he must deserve you, or I will break the bonds, as I can. I will not be a party to the crime."

"What crime is that?" said a smooth voice in the doorway.

"One, Mr. Ladeuce," said Adelaide, as she turned and perceived him, "with whose commission, singular as that may seem to you, you have no concern."

## XIV.

LADEUCE had returned some time since, but had kept rather quiet. As he had once before told the Captain that he came to help him bring up Dominique, now he said he had come to help him find him.

"I am not looking for him," said the Captain.

Nevertheless, he stayed. Here he might find some clue to Dominique; elsewhere it would be difficult, if not impossible. "To tell you the truth," he said, "it is as much your Gascoygne, yonder, as Dominique that I want. That little irregularity of the heart has become troublesome again."

"A heart," said Captain Dacre, "as hard as the nether millstone must be out of order, indeed, to make you aware of its existence."

Bitter as the loneliness was, the Captain saw but little of the Lieutenant, busy, much of his time in the laboratory, trying to penetrate the

fertilizing secret of certain phosphates and nitrates that should have a fortune in it, and so let the fortune in possession go whence it came. It would have gone, if he had had to become a coal-heaver, the day that Dominique went, had not his yearning for his son made it imperative to keep house and home and all as before, that he might some day revisit it.

Ladeuce may have found the life a trifle solitary, too; but he occupied himself as formerly, with the fishermen over in Coastcliff town, with more than one run out to sea in his own boat, with frequent visits to Allia, who welcomed him again as sunshine from the outside world of which she saw so little, save for some seldom flight to the city to make demands upon her other trustees, or to take an afternoon at the theatre. "You are as fresh as a flower," said Ladeuce, who had that voluptuous enjoyment of voluptuous things which made little Allia's brown and scarlet skin give him a portion of the same pleasure that his somewhat cultivated senses would have found in a painting by Greuze. "It would be rare to take you out and show you the things you imagine. And I might, perhaps, if I were not old enough to be your father."

"I don't know what difference that need make," pouted Allia.

When, later, the Captain muttered to Ladeuce something about his waste of time in these regions, "Is that so?" said Ladeuce with his sweet low laugh. "Could I spend it any better? When does that moon-eyed heiress on the hill, the little Allia, come to her majority? I may double my fortune with hers and let the *Nightbird* go."

But Captain Dacre was of a desperate cast in these days. He thought of the silly little beauty on the hill, the charge of that woman who had been his best friend on earth, who had brought Adelaide into life for Dominique, and he looked at the presentable person of the man who, to a natural external polish, had added some of the grace that comes by contact with people of grace, and by more or less reading of books off watch and on shore. "Hark ye, Ladeuce," said he, in his old commanding tones, "not another word of that, or we turn the tables and it is I that will denounce you!" And Ladeuce sauntered from the room, humming the refrain of a tune the Captain had heard many a boatload of men sing in the

surf of Southern shores. "It is idle, idle, idle," groaned the Captain. "The man is returning me to what I was!"

But Ladeuce was not concerning himself about his influence upon the Captain; nor did he intend his stay to be a long one, when he should have accomplished his purpose. He was playing for a large stake, and could well afford to let the *Night-bird* make her voyages without him, or even take a pleasure trip about the world, if in the mean time he might win, and so become the benefactor and treasurer of the man whom he should lead into fabulous riches. He had some little property of his own — not much — he had been a free spender; but these riches were hardly less than the mines of Potosi, and they meant all that was fair and festive in his fancy; they meant escape from danger and work and care, as from the dark spectres of forgotten storms, life under southern suns in splendor of courts and palaces, under southern stars in myrtle shadows. Did he not know the joys possible to these young European nobles of unbounded wealth? Had he not heard the inextinguishable laughter of the gods? Had he not seen

from afar their villas in the laurels and roses of the Mediterranean shores, music and flowers and beauty and pleasure from morning till night, from night till morning? Did it not mean rank and power, unlimited luxury and the pride of the flesh? "I shall not be the Marquis myself," laughed Ladeuce softly in his thoughts, "but I shall be next to the Marquis." Yet, on the heels of the thought, he could not help a start when he heard Gascoygne, as he held one of a remnant of drawings that Adelaide and Dominique had done under his supervision, long ago, for her class of bad boys in the town, saying, "Yes, indeed, Miss Grey, you are right; that fairy story is a political treatise in disguise, and, in a humbler way, it ought to be the *vade mecum* of all adventurers, too. The cunning friend of the Marquis of Carabas tells all their tales in one." And glancing at the drawing, he saw that Adelaide's pencil had sketched a curious likeness to himself in the countenance of the spurred and booted cat. Both likeness and speech might be accidental, probably were; but the revelation that they made was accusation and judgment and sentence, too. It only decided him to quicken his

movements. He went out with Allia — she very happy with the black pearl he had given her, which looked like a clot of poison but which eclipsed in her eyes every pearl the *Winged Victory* brought Adelaide — into the garden where old John, busy with some bulbs, not far away, presented his broad back to the contemplation of the universe. "These are the days," she said, "when we miss Dominique; we used to be out with him so much in boats."

"Your cousin Adelaide does not seem to miss him badly."

"I should n't wonder," said Allia, "if she heard from him. Indeed — but you must never know it — I am almost sure she does."

"She is very peculiar, then, to keep her knowledge of him to herself, and let my old friend languish in his sorrow. One would do a good work," said Ladeuce reflectively, "who restored that son to the father. I would go for him to-morrow if I knew his whereabouts. What makes you sure that she knows more than another?"

Allia glanced at him cautiously. "Oh, will you promise me," she said, "that you will never breathe it?"

"Is it not enough for you to make me the request? I would promise you anything!"

"A telegram came to her. I saw it. I ought not, you know. But I wanted to. And it was only a Bible text. I could n't make anything of it, — but of course she could. And it had no date. And it came by cable. And that is all," said Allia breathlessly, frightened at herself from every point of view.

"By cable! Do you get me a sight of that bit of paper!"

"Why? What good will that do?"

"I can trace its starting-point at the office, and we will have Dominique back in the time it takes me to fetch him," he said with a glowing face and a joyous laugh. "You are a faithful child to wish to do your friends this service."

"Do you want to know the rest?" she said then, after a moment, winding and unwinding her scarf of red Madeira lace. "This morning there came to her a box; and it was full of fresh orange-blossoms! Not a blemish on them! Oh, it was so sweet! I am not betraying anything there, for you must have noticed how the whole house smells like an altar."

"Fresh orange-blossoms? They could not have come from far, then. That tells the story. The cable gives the port, the port gives the ship. Do you want a whole string of black pearls? I will bring them when I bring Dominique."

Ladeuce had seen the bit of paper before another day was over, and had gone about his business. If the orange-blossoms did not indeed tell the story, yet, in conjunction with the message by cable, they told enough to the Lieutenant's mind for him to conjecture that Dominique had to do with foreign shipping, and was just now in an American port.

He would not tell him how resplendently Adelaide looked that morning as he passed her in the doorway, with the bunch of orange-blossoms at her throat, with the bloom, the blush, the brightness on her face, as if she were herself the spirit of all the sumptuous beauty of sea and sky and air upon that summer's day. Between that and little Allia's beauty, of the earth earthy, there was the difference that there is between a poppy and a star.

## XV.

THE Lieutenant had given the patient work of years to the development of his discoveries concerning Dominique, and he had the patience and the cunning of a cat to give. This part was but play. If he was not in one near port, he would be in another.

To find him, to approach him in his own solicitous fashion, to represent himself as injured by Dominique's course, to beguile him, hungry for news from home, for an hour to his own yacht in the stream, — all that was no long operation.

The *Nightbird*, that had discharged her contraband cargo and had been awaiting his directions, was in the port where he ordered her, taut and trim, and so well disguised that not even Dominique would have thought her anything but a craft built for fast sailing, according to some peculiar fancy of her owner, the night that he sat on her deck as the moon went down, and the soft

wind swelled all the white sails up all their lofty height, and the water hissed away in foam beneath the sharp keel that cleft it.

There was too much self-contempt and too much wisdom in Dominique to let him accuse Ladeuce of his ruin. Nobody but himself, he knew, could ruin a man. But the tempter had no longer any attraction for him, and he was on his deck only through a disinclination to refuse, through a certain residue of his old kindliness, because the man was just from Coastcliff and the Lonely Beach, and because, finally, he had assured him that he had important business which could be best transacted with him there. His own ship, the one of which he went first mate, was to sail upon the morning tide. Ladeuce had caught him on the wing.

Dominique had but an hour or two to spend here, and they had been below when the *Nightbird* silently shook out a sail and stole away so gently that one hardly observed she was moving.

"I will give you a touch of my speed," said Ladeuce, as they came on deck. And as they took their seats, he added, "You will not be on hand to sail with your ship."

Dominique sprang to his feet. "Not?" he cried like a trumpet. "Not? What do you mean?" And then, as he looked about him, "Are you going to complete my ruin?"

"Softly, softly," said the Lieutenant. "We have no loud voices on the *Nightbird*. Before you grow violent you will hear reason, and see that there is reason in it. *Ce!* You have been upon this deck before."

"I? Never!" cried Dominique.

"Pray be seated," said the Lieutenant blandly as ever. "I have much to say to you of infinitely more moment than the recovery of your position as mate of any ship that ever sailed. You have been, I say, on the *Nightbird* before. She was a slaver then."

"A slaver!"

"A slaver. How many years ago is it, that the stanch little devil whipped the hurricane, one midnight, down in the black waters off the Caymans, and Dacre and I—"

"Dacre! Dacre!"

"No excitement. It is twenty years ago and more. My friend, Captain Dacre of the Lonely

Beach, was master of the *Nightbird*, and brought her safely away from many a stern chase, loaded to the water's edge with negroes — "

"You lie!" cried Dominique. And with the word Ladeuce had measured his length upon the deck, while the other stood over him blazing in white wrath.

"I do not lie," said Ladeuce calmly, rising on one elbow a moment and waving back those who would have sprung to his aid, "except upon the deck. And you will hear me out if I have to order you put in irons to do it. It is for your own interest."

"For my own interest!" exclaimed Dominique drawing back. "For my own interest that you tell me my father was — "

"He is not your father," said Ladeuce, picking himself up. And he rubbed his bruises contentedly.

Dominique staggered into his seat.

"For God's sake!" he cried, "is the whole world a lie? Ladeuce, will you torture me so — I cannot — no, no, it is false!"

"It is true," said Ladeuce. "I shall call Cap-

tain Dacre to witness, if you force me. He will tell you, as I do, that you, a child upon your drowning mother's breast, lashed to a spar, were drawn from the wreckage of the barque *El Rey*, tumbling by us that black midnight; that the woman went back to her grave a half-hour later, and that you were taken by him for his son. I shall run the *Nightbird* to the bay, before his door, and if you have a doubt he shall set it quite at rest."

As the smooth voice slipped on, there flashed on Dominique's memory, through all his bewilderment and doubt and pain, the stormy night at the Lonely Beach when they had talked of slavers till the Captain turned faint and sick. "My father! oh, my father!" cried Dominique. His arms fell listlessly and he shook with great sobs.

"*Desde cuando?*" said Ladeuce. "As I said before, he is nothing of the kind. And I see no need of trouble at that! He is a man living under menace of the penalty of piracy, the sword of the law liable to fall — no, it is a rope, though —"

"Silence!" thundered Dominique, the flash of

his eyes making his tears like sparks of fire. "I will not hear another word."

"You cannot help yourself," with a wave of the arm indicating his authority there. "Dacre will tell you all this is true. That, moreover, he owns the *Nightbird* at this moment—"

It was Dominique's oath at his impotence, for whose utterance, although under his breath, Ladeuce politely paused.

"At this moment. So much for that business. But he will not tell you," continued Ladeuce, "for he does not know, that your mother had just life enough to whisper to me your name and race; that I have her wedding ring, a part of her linen with its name and coronet, and the chain and locket from your own throat. Does that interest you? If you are not the son of the slaver, Dacre, do you not want to know who you are?"

"No, no, no," sobbed Dominique again. "I care for nothing. I want nothing. If this is true I want nothing but death. If I am not his son I am nobody's. But it cannot be true! I swear, I swear it cannot!"

Ladeuce rose and walked forward. His fall had

stiffened him a trifle. He was not altogether in condition for this excitement. Still it was but pleasurable excitement. When he came back, Dominique was quiet again, staring out over the shining wake they cut in the red glow of the sinking moon, his face as white and set as a death mask.

"You must have known these things sooner or later, and you should hold me not as your enemy in the telling, but your benefactor," said the master of the *Nightbird*. "I have taken this ring, this locket, this marked linen, those whispered words; I have left my business and gone to the centre of authority; I have unravelled all mystery, I have traced every thread, I have not left one stitch dropped; I have entered your claim, I have won your cause; you await only your investiture. For I have proved that the Marquis del Riviero was killed in an insurrection on one of his West Indian estates, to correct abuses on which he had left Spain; that his wife and child and their servants escaped on the barque *El Rey;* that you are that child; and that all the estates and their accumulated, their

unspeakable wealth, and all their titles, a dozen in number, belong to you, Don Angel the Marquis del Riviero y Zumalaxericas. To the proof, I have every document and affidavit needed, and at your service. You do not realize, it may be," he went on, at Dominique's impatient gesture, "what this wealth means. That you are a grandee of Spain, that you are one who may wear your hat before the king, that signifies little to you, *que lastima!* Yet to walk your people's halls while their eyes follow you from the painted walls, heroes all, that should make their blood sweep superbly in your veins, even yours, Dominique! And then you forget that life where breath is luxury, under the great sweet orange boughs, under the stars that hang out of heaven like lamps, troops of girls at the fountains, guitars, heaps of fruit, eyes flashing from mantillas at the church-door — *Ay de mi!* Of what am I talking? That is not the life of princes, of the owners of millions, of the dwellers in castles and towers, unless they choose to doff their splendor. What delight in spending, in giving, in doing! You are glad to toss a girl a bunch of roses today; you may empty a garden of roses into her

room to-morrow! Now, perhaps, you will see the necessity I have been under to compel you to listen for your own advantage."

"And what do you expect for all this?" said Dominique hoarsely.

"Gratitude."

"And that is —"

"Your friendship and — your purse — to speak openly," with the low rippling laugh.

"You will have neither."

"Señor Don Angel!"

"None of your ribaldry with me!" cried Dominique, "or I will throw you into the sea! It was for this that you took my ruin and disgrace in hand! To teach me to loathe a simple life, pure love, healthy aspirations! It was for this that you led me through riotous nights and disgusting days, that I might learn to prize the luxury awaiting me and find myself unable to do without it. I believe that you lie in your throat. And let who will enjoy your castle in Spain, it will not be I. I will not add one hair to the burden my father has borne for me —"

"I shall have to show you the papers, I see."

"I refuse to look at them."

Ladeuce, his eyes upon the deck, lifted his cap from his forehead. "The papers are below," he said. "You will go down with me." When he looked up again there were men at either side of Dominique. "You will forgive me this," he said, "when the king calls you cousin. Now, quietly, or by force."

"Let them lay a finger on me!" cried Dominique.

"Quietly, or by force."

And Dominique went below; and he saw the proof. There was no possibility of disbelief.

"For what remains," said Ladeuce, "that is, in relation to the matter of the slaver, when we anchor to-morrow, if the sea is quiet I will be set ashore and bring Captain Dacre off. You will not doubt his word. He will but reinforce mine." And then Dominique went on deck again.

In what a wild whirl were his emotions, his thoughts, if he could call them thoughts, where everything came as it were by the flashes of lightning that reveal outlines on the darkness of night. His father, whom he had adored, whom he

had idolized, who idolized him! That he should have been connected with this, capable of this, guilty of this! A thousand points started up bristling in the light now, and his doubts were torn to shreds of vapor upon them. But he could not connect them, he could not reason about them; he felt as if all things were annihilated, and he alone left above the empty hollow, as he walked the deck for hours.

The vast shell of the sky wheeled slowly over him and the sea, the great sails soared dimly into the darkness; the night wore gray with its dust of stars, and saffron hints began to gleam along the eastern water, while a great morning star came out with steady glow; but he saw none of it. Then the topmast tipped itself with a point of flame, the topsail glowed like some hovering thing of life far up aloft, a rosy gush of light welled up and filled the immense spaces, and day broke over the wide, solemn hush of the high seas. Still Dominique walked the deck, unheeding the change of watch or the change of time.

Ladeuce slept on below; he had felt but poorly after the stormy night-scene ended; a thought

struck him like a chill, that, after all, he might never come into the fruit of his labors.

The sun, who, if not our creator, preserver, and benefactor, is at any rate the viceroy of that power, brought some slight help. With the withdrawal of darkness, a shade of confusion and hopelessness withdrew also. Dominique remembered that Ladeuce had said this was all twenty years ago and more. It was twenty years ago that his father forsook this black business, saw its horror, suffered with its shame. Twenty years is a good part of a lifetime. The Captain Dacre of that day was not the Captain Dacre of this. Some accident threw him into that current, rudely born and bred, the drift of the sea. When he realized the thing, he labored to leave it. Was Dominique going to believe there was one bad seed left in the lovely soul of the old man? Not if a voice from heaven proclaimed it. His religion was real, his self-sacrifice was utter, his love was perfect. If he had ever done wrong, it had been unwittingly; convicted of the wrong, he had cast himself free. Should Ladeuce bring him off to face his son and confess the sin that in all these silent years had

been branding him to the bone? Never! His father should never dream Dominique knew the past. His soul should not be seared with that. His son would take him, and they would go away together where no one should find them. They could have peace yet, if not joy.

And Adelaide. There came a fresh pang, rending his soul asunder. Whatever he knew, whatever he felt, he could not expect the same of her, nor could he connect her with this disgrace. Never could he take her in ignorance of this stain upon him; never could he betray the facts about his father for the sake of regaining her. It did not occur to him that if it were not his father, then the stain had nothing to do with himself. He was part and parcel with the man whom he called father; he was his son in spirit, if not in flesh. He did not reason out so much as that. Adelaide must not know; that was all. If his wife, she would have a right to know. She must not be his wife then. He would never go back to her. She was young; she would forget him. Another man must hear that tender voice, must meet the heavenly sweetness of her smiles, feel the soft touches of

those arms, rest in the daily loveliness of face and thought and ways. Their marriage was but a fiction, after all, as one might say. She should be freed. One day it would be a faint memory. And, one day, perhaps Gascoygne — His hands clasped behind his head as he walked, his upturned face confronting the dawn, the groan that passed his lips seemed to tear its way from his soul.

And now Dominique set himself to some serious thinking.

On the Spanish business and his heritage he did not pause. For the other, there was but one decision to make, and its consequences to meet. If his father's heart had not already been broken by his boy's heart-breaking conduct, it should never be broken by the knowledge that Dominique was acquainted with his early life. Since he could remember him, his life had been a perfect one. The perfect man was the man he knew, not the tempted, the sinning, the brutal. This man had no more in common with that than the white-winged moth has with the loathsome worm before the chrysalis. His memory overswept countless

scenes of the old Captain's gentleness and patience, his simplicity and sweetness. Was the man who sat by the winter's fire, imagining God's scheme of making the dust of the earth heroic, a bad man? Was it he that turned faint and sick when his enemy dragged the past before him, and Adelaide and Dominique had said they would as soon touch the hand of a leper as the hand smirched with such a record? No matter what the record had been, he loved him just the same. Never should harm come to him! Had he drawn the shipwrecked out of sea and storm? Neither sea nor storm should prevail against him, — much less this reptile! Dominique's brain burned with a white heat as he remembered the wretch; burned with great throbs pulsating through all his body; his heart seemed to pause and snatch his breath at every beat. "O my father, my sweet old father!" he cried. "Never fear! Your son stands between you and wrong! Were his facts a thousand times true, his story is yet a lie! And I love you so I will die before he touches you!"

None of all this had been thinking, after all, so much as swift perception. Yet now it narrowed

down to two points of question and answer. Who was there, Dominique asked himself, that knew of this old slaver sufficiently to bring the matter home personally? Who knew of it, in fact, at all?

No soul but Ladeuce — no one being alive upon the earth. The knowledge was locked in the Lieutenant's breast, would be silent there forever were his tongue stilled, were his hand nerveless. And where was every document relating to it?

On this vessel.

There was but one course. Was treading on a snake's head murder? If it were ten thousand murders, it was all the same.

Then Dominique threw himself on the deck and slept without a dream far into the day.

Ladeuce was just going over the side as he awoke. "Good-by," he said. "Perhaps my work is all in vain. But you will await me and the guest I bring to you. When you see me again we will have changed the complexion of things!"

Two men went with him. They ran up a sail and soon were a speck on the horizon.

The *Nightbird* had reduced her sail, and was slowly edging her way into Coastcliff Bay. Dominique went below and occupied himself there — with some charts, thought the officer who went to see, since everything else was under lock; with pacing up and down like a wild creature in a cage, another one reported. He was below a long time. The men came back before he went on deck, and the vessel had anchored.

With a glass, as they rolled on the slight swell, he could see the long low town, the outer hill with the cottage gleaming among its gardens, the white curve of the Lonely Beach and the knot of gnarled oaks beyond it. The late afternoon sun was just reddening hill and town and spire, and Ladeuce was not returning. Dominique laughed, as he saw it, while his glass swept the expanse. It was Wednesday; and Wednesday was the day on which Captain Dacre and Dominique had always dined at the cottage, and passed the night. It was unlikely that his father had broken through the habit of years, or that the cottage people should allow it, now that he was all alone. Ladeuce was waiting at the Lonely Beach; he would

wait all night. His father was sitting now on one of the flowering terraces, with Adelaide going and coming about him, — the flower herself, the sunbeam! Little did he think it was in this way he should return to her, unseen himself, although so near, unseen and impalpable as the dead! Ah, if the glass would but give her to him now, now when it was the last time he should ever try to look upon her. God bless the dear girl, God help her! If she suffered, she but shared his pain. All things that had to do with him must suffer.

It was some time afterward that Dominique approached the officer of the deck. "I should like for myself," he said, one hand on his pistol pocket, "the yawl with which your commander went ashore. I go the same way. For you and the rest there is the Cape, as you know, not quite a dozen miles to the eastward. If you have anything of value here you had best get it out; and you cannot be too quick about it. I see that you have boats enough."

The men surveyed curiously the dark young stranger, whose conduct had been so peculiar, whose face was so white, and whose voice seemed

now to come from so far away. "Are you beside yourself, sir?" he asked.

"You will be, if another hour finds you on the *Nightbird*," said Dominique. "Do you recognize this signature?" It was the draft with which Ladeuce had once paid to him some heavy gaming debts and that, through all his woe and want, he had scorned to use. "It will make good any loss you meet," he said. And then the quick sharp dialogue that followed, the purse that changed hands with the draft, although it left him penniless, and the intrepid spirit in the heat of whose flame these men were but the sparks flying upward, completed the work he wished.

An hour later the *Nightbird*, with all sail set and not a soul aboard, was drifting into Coastcliff Bay in the rosy twilight. Two boats had left her, making for the Cape, and another, with its head pointed in the opposite direction, was stealing over the purpling water like a ghost.

## XVI.

THE old Captain sat in the garden chair of the terrace under Mrs. Stuart's window. He had abated something of his unrest, and something of his condemnation, too, since Adelaide had told him of the orange-flowers.

"It means marriage bells and wreaths," said he. "It means that he sees his way clear and will soon be here; that he feels sure of himself; that he has withstood his temptations. We shall see him presently, my Adelaide." The Captain had no idea of breaking any bonds now. In the dulling of his own hurt and the unconscious action of his affections through all this time, he had come to believe in the working of new miracles, and that Dominique was about to deserve Adelaide. Just now he was sound asleep, with his newspaper over his head, and Gascoygne, returned from his afternoon visits, was walking down one of the garden aisles to Adelaide, who stood knee-deep among the white and gold lilies.

Old John lifted his broad back as he went by. "Do you see anything out in the bay, sir?" said he. "I was looking through my glass a while ago, and I think his friend is after the old Captain again. Might have given him more breathing-space than a week. His room's better than his company. His company's worse for the Captain than Dominique's room," with a chuckle in his fat throat.

He went for the glass and adjusted it to Gascoygne's eye. "You see her, sir?" he said. "She was close hauled when I happened to spy her out, an hour gone. But since then she's hoisted anchor and crowded on sail, and that I don't make out, for she's always kept her distance in these waters before."

"She is certainly bearing down on the Black Buoy. I wonder how well she knows the coast?"

"You had better believe, Doctor, she's sounded every fathom more than once."

"She'll be grounded on the reef—"

"If she stands to her course. But she'll go about. I don't quite see through that rig, though."

"I don't see anybody aboard of her," said Gascoygne.

"It might n't have been two boats left her on the Cape side; but I 'll swear I saw another, with a peaked sail and gaff, running for the straight line between the breakers of the Lonely Beach."

"Then Ladeuce will be there when the Captain returns to-morrow. It 's a thousand pities. He 's wearing the old man's nerves to tatters. John, I think it 's time we — "

"Did a little something, sir. Yes, sir. I wish to God, sir, my beard was black again. But a man 's like the new red roses, — after they get purple the second day, there 's no watering will turn them red again."

"Well, well. I rather think you 'll do. Just shave a half-inch down your cheek, enough to show the sabre-cut, while Thomas puts in the horse, and I should n't wonder if we put the foe to flight. Another siege of him, and the old Captain would go to the wall."

In a half-hour they were trundling along the causeway at the head of the meadows, through the wood where the shadows and the wild fragrances were already heavy, and out upon the open. It was a clear twilight glorified by a moon.

But a spark in the window was the only light in the old house as they drew near; it was the tip of the cigar the Lieutenant smoked at the open window. Gascoygne went on ahead, passed round the corner, and entered the house.

"Good evening, Lieutenant," he said. "You have come back, I see."

"Why, my young Doctor, is it you?" cried the Lieutenant. "By all that's good, that is fortunate. Be seated, pray. Will you smoke? No? I can recommend these Habanas. No small vices? Yes, I have come back, you see, and partly to continue your treatment."

"You make a mistake, Lieutenant," said Gascoygne, still standing. "I told you long ago I could do nothing for you. You came back, I think, to see an old acquaintance. John, here!"

"Lieutenant," said a voice out of the shadow, "I have grown gray since we served together." And the stooping shape of the gardener came into the moonlight that fell through another window like a pale halo on the gathering gloom, straightened itself, and confronted the Lieutenant. "I have

grown gray since we served together. But you remember the night I got this stroke with a cutlass?"

Ladeuce did not move, but one could see a slight tremor shivering through him. His lips parted, but the whispered, "Jasper!" seemed to stay between them.

"Jasper. That is what they called me on the middle passage. John Jasper is my name up here, the name my father, and my grandfather, in the fishing-town, bore before me here."

"Well, John," said Ladeuce then lightly, "I sometimes thought there was a familiar bend in your back — I don't know that I ever saw your face — over your work in the gardens. I don't know that I ever heard your voice. Dashed if I could place you. Stupid of me. I suppose you followed Dacre."

"Perhaps the Captain followed me," said the gardener, leaning on the back of a chair. "I always had a fancy for turning over the earth. I had come here, and was the gardener on the hill, before the Captain and his boy were wrecked out there on the reef."

"Sly old fox, to keep it to himself!"

"He had n't it to keep," said John. "White head and beard and eyebrows, stooping back, another hundredweight, and a silent tongue have been as good as rolling seas between us. The Captain has never guessed my riddle, Lieutenant."

"He has n't? May I ask why you have never read it to him?"

"I don't know as that's your affair. But I'd just as soon tell you. I lay low at first, to see how the land lay, and when I found out the life he wanted to live for the sake of the boy, I'd no mind to hinder. I'd no quarrel with him when we sailed together."

"And when did you place your confidence in our friend here, the Doctor?"

"When I guessed you were leading Dominique to the dogs, and worrying the old Captain into the grave. We'd grown pretty fond of Dominique up here, you see."

"And what have you come to me for? Hush-money? But you could have had that of him. To ship on board the *Nightbird* again? These old sea-dogs will return to their —"

"Nothing of the sort, Lieutenant. To ship with you? It was a dark night, Lieutenant, but do you suppose I don't know where I got this cutlass-wound and who threw up your arm? You had a good grudge against me then; you've a better now. Not to ship with you!" And the gardener laughed grimly. "To tell you to quit, Lieutenant."

"To tell you," said Gascoygne, "that your power over Captain Dacre is gone, and you must be back on your ship before morning."

"It seems to me you are imperative."

"Perhaps so. The case is urgent. And you do not care to be denounced?"

"Denounced? Do you expect," he exclaimed to the gardener, with that ripple of a laugh like the bubbling of a flute under water, — "do you expect to betray me and go scot-free yourself? Come to denouncing, and I have a word to say."

"It would n't do any good, Lieutenant. I was tried for piracy on the high seas long ago, and served out a part of my sentence, and got my pardon, and my mistress knew it when she took me." The gardener chuckled again at the thought.

"She believes she's been the saving of me," he said. "But Lord! I would n't run my neck into that noose again not for love of money. All of us Coastcliff fellows have got to have a turn on a man-of-war, or be cast away in the South Seas, or take a hand at smuggling or the African trade or whaling. We should n't think we were able-bodied seamen if we did n't. But I had all I wanted. I like pottering about my flowers all day and going home to my old woman and the children of nights a sight the best."

"Well, Lieutenant, that is all to-night," said Gascoygne. "I am sorry to have to tell you that if you are here to-morrow, or ever again, there will be more. We fail to understand your motives, but we have too much interest in an old man who has blotted out wrong with right, in the lad who has grown into our hearts, — in his wife, — to have them injured or annoyed further. And so good-night."

As they left the room the gardener came back and looked in the door again. "Do you mind," said he, "the little chap that slapped your face for you when you were saucy to his sister over

there by the rope-walk one day? That's my boy."

"Damn your boy!" said the Lieutenant.

When he heard the sound of their wheels on the causeway coming through the quiet air he relighted his cigar and laughed a little. What odds would all this rodomontade make? He should have Dacre and be off with him in the skiff by sunrise, and good-by to Coastcliff and the whole kit of them here. One would smile at it all when secure in the castle in Spain. A castle in Spain — the old phrase struck him. Ah, ah! but he had taken pains enough with the foundation! And what was this about a wife? The more to cut loose from, that was all, and serve my lady right. But he would n't have supposed a little thing could have excited him so. He would have liked to wring that young cockerel's neck. However, let those laugh that win. By sunrise — To-night, he was fairly tired out and should drop asleep in his chair.

How still it was! A moment ago he heard the thin fine strain of a bugle blowing sweetly from the boat of some pleasure party up the little

Coastcliff River; now nothing but the ripple of a spent wave. Through all the damp coolness and salt breath of the wide air, over meadow and under the low wood, only the rustle of a leaf, the fanning of a moth's wing, the floating of a falling flower. One could hear silence itself. Silence broken only by the seldom plash of the breaker, by the faint beating of oars in the rowlocks, far out upon the sea, in the moon — or was it the beating of one's heart, regular, repeating, — growing louder, — growing louder, — turning to thunder on one's ear! Infernally close these rooms when one had had a whole sky to breathe in — By the Lord!

What was it that made him bound from his seat and fall back again? A white vision in the moonshine? A cold hand laid upon his heart? The first dream of the night? The Lieutenant had dropped asleep in his chair.

But the beating of the oars in the rowlocks was more and more distinct and real. It was from the oars of a boatman making shore between the breakers that barely showed a white lip at him. Since he had left the *Nightbird* the wind had

fallen and his sail had flapped loose and idle, and he had taken no heed of the tide that was against him in rowing. It made small difference; he bent over his oars and with straining muscles sent the boat along by great lengths, all alone on the wide weird water in the moon, pushing forward to his fell purpose. Now he was in the still stretch between the two horns of the breaker; now the boat slid slowly up the sand, and he clambered out and stretched his cramped limbs a moment before he put on his jacket, looked to his priming, and passed up the long slope, up the wet reach of the margin bared by the tide, up the loose bluff of sand, up the soft stretch of turf to the house.

No light in the house; that was well. The master was on the hill, the man and maid were at their jollity in the town. There was a window, and some one sitting at it. A thin cloud gathered and blew across the moon as Dominique crept up farther. A man, he thought, — a man asleep. A dozen steps nearer. He would not shoot a man asleep. The fellow should know what struck him. And then the cloud blew off and blew away to threads in the violet vaults of the midnight sky.

The moon, that had come round, shone full on the sleeper's face with cold, clear lustre. Ah, let your hand fall, Dominique, and the weapon roll away from it untouched, for fate has been before you here! No sleeper's face is this, — but the face of a dead man. Ladeuce had been gathered to his fathers — if he had any.

## XVII.

When Dominique reeled away from the house, staggering as if struck with the rebound of the blow that had slain his foe, he was aware of but one sensation, — that he must put miles and miles between himself and the crime he had committed. Beads stood on his forehead, but he was cold as clay, cold as that thing in the window behind him there, — that icy thing staring at the moon. He would have been glad to be as dead as that. To be like that? Oh, never like that, nothing in common with that! Let him make haste away till distance should swallow it! He pushed off his boat mechanically, and began to row heavily. Whither? To the Cape? To the *Nightbird?* His keel was grazing on the pebbles across the bay, before he realized that he was on his way to Adelaide. Not to speak with her, to hold her, to caress her, but just once more to see her sweet, pure face, and then to put the side of

the earth between them. Then all the veils of all horizons should cover it from him forever!

He climbed the steep path, going round by the back of the hill, that he might avoid everybody, and paused at the gate in the wall on the side of the town, where the little wicket creaked on its hinges. He would go out that way again, and follow the high road. One minute he waited to listen. Not a sound betrayed that any one had heard him. A branch, rising on the faintly rising breeze, shook down a mist of fragrant dew, and a thrush somewhere in its recesses seemed to dream a song. Over his head an althea, with its clusters of pale bloom, towered white in the moonlight that overlay it, and fell on the hedge of white hydrangeas; just at hand the great cedars dropped their silvered boughs; faint wafts of bergamot and balm, and mint and lemon leaf, came blended in cool, delicious breaths; and as he stepped cautiously down the walk, he could see the lilies trembling in all their gold and snow, and feel the stifling sweetness that drifted from their cups along the slow night air. But he noted nothing of it all; if he was ever so dimly aware of it, it was but as the

atmosphere of peace and innocence putting a sharp edge to his sense of guilt, his sense of guilt that had fallen on him suddenly as a thunderbolt falls. Now, as he turned the screen of the purple clematis and honeysuckle, came the glow from the open doors and casements of the house. And now, stealing nearer, he could see their shapes within, could see Adelaide walking up and down the hall on his father's arm, could even hear their voices. They talked lightly of their unrest, their expectations; he heard his own name; they were saying he could not be far away, and any day or night might bring him; and, if not that, then the next voyage at all events. They were saying how chivalric was the nature that felt so deeply its forfeit that it would not accept the happiness waiting for him, till it should be earned, that had given years of his life for his sin-offering, that had sent him out alone in the world to expiate the faults of the hot and heedless hours of youth, to seek deliverance from temptations that might haunt him, and cure for his past ail. "It is his search for the Holy Grail," said Adelaide. "We must not think how we long for him. We must only think how

strong and noble he will be when he comes back." What a chill was this that swept over him like a wind from the tomb, and curdled his blood, and stiffened the plunging of his heart! Ah, what an outcast was he from that paradise! Nor was it to be helped. Were it undone, he would do it all again. Were the crime to commit, his hand would be as red.

From where he stood he looked directly through the hall. Now they were under the hall-lamp, against which a moth was beating. Adelaide had on a thin gown, the color of her eyes, and she wore her mother's yellow pearls. How sorry was this look that had grown in his father's eyes! They went forward to the door, where Allia sat on the step, fingering a broken string of beads. One had just rolled away from her; she went to get a lamp to carry out and look for it. Was it the little Voodoo god? Was it on that that Captain Dacre quietly set his foot, crushing it to powder? Who knows? For at the instant of her return, shading the lamp with a calla-leaf, a sudden cry from her lips startled one and all to look her way. And there against the sky-line of the

bay, almost as if grounded on the outer reef, rose the likeness of a burning ship at sea, — sails and shrouds and spars, cordage and pennon and long low hull, outlined in fire, a towering flame, a thousand towering flames, with just the film of distance and of moonshine making reality a phantom. For a time, every one was stone-still in the splendor and awfulness of the apparition. Not even Dominique, not even Adelaide, heard the Captain murmur to himself: "By Heaven! If I did not know it was mirage, if I did not know she was down under the equator, I could think it was the craft herself, and that it was all up with Ladeuce!" But something straightened him as he gazed, something lifted a load from him, as if he saw his sins and all their evil train consuming, and the smoke of them ascending a burnt sacrifice to heaven. After all, a better knowledge told him that that cloud of fair flame, that whirling, wrapping sheet of fire, that core of red heat, that pall of pitchy smoke sweeping away on the land-breeze and floating farther and farther out to sea, blacker than blackness in the moonbeam, was no mirage, and he could not be mistaken in the *Nightbird*.

Dominique saw the whole thing through the vista of the hall. A fierce joy fluttered over him in the midst of his misery. For an instant out of the intense shadow he had started into the full moonlight; then, as the flame of smoke and cinders fell away upon the wind, came over all his aching consciousness some grewsome fantasy of the ashes of a castle in Spain, and he shrank back into hiding.

A half-hour's waiting. But he had no idea of the passage of time. Captain Dacre went back into the house, and sat down with Mrs. Stuart and Miss Grey, for a good-night game of casino; Adelaide strolled down the hall again and out the garden door. She stood there so near him that he could touch her, that he could perceive the scent of roses always hovering about her. Good God! could he endure it? Then she had gone on and up the garden walk, and was standing where the open light fell on a staff twisted and re-twisted with the trumpet-flower vine like wreaths of flame behind her. It was not her mere loveliness that moved him so, although to his excited senses that exceeded all women's loveliness before her. It

was herself, the personality that, if fire had scarred and marred her, would have been the same, her single-hearted earnestness, her sanguine belief in prevailing goodness, the fine texture of her nature, and that sweet innocence which knowledge of evil could not soil, all mingled in one temper, as all the colors of heaven go to the making of clear white light, and all a part of the life that had grown up between them almost from childhood, common to both of them. Nor was it that these things in the detail occurred to Dominique; it was the impression of the whole that his heart felt like the stamp of the seal upon hot wax. She was lovely, she was herself, she was his! If for one moment he could clasp her! And the gulfs of the eternities gaped between them, the gates of hell prevailed against them!

As she stood there, she was singing. How peaceful, how perfect, how heavenly it was, with the flowers and fragrances, the silence that followed on the song, the moonlight sleeping far and wide, — oh! the accursed moonlight that rested, too, upon that stiffening mask, that upturned face in the window at the Lonely Beach! Presently

she went on and up through the lilies; she would soon be out of sight. Gascoygne's voice was heard calling her; the silver tones replied. He was conscious that all things were taking on an exaggerated strain, as if he were in a rarer atmosphere. "It will not do, it will not do," he said to himself. "I must get out of this, or my brain will burst." And he crept to the next shadow, and stopped to hear whether crackling gravel or twig told of him or not, ere he gained the shelter of the old lilac walk, when all at once Gascoygne's voice rang out again. "Adelaide! Dominique is in the garden. Dominique! I saw you." A wild fright seized him at the words. He cowered in the gloom a minute, and then there was a flutter and a flight and a quick glad cry coming, and, with a leap like that of some desperate thing of the woods, he started to flee he knew not whither, and ran into Adelaide's arms.

"Unhand me!" he cried savagely, in a hard, hoarse voice. "Unhand me, I tell you! Will you let me go, or not?" The piercing sorrow and surprise and hesitation as she called his name again cut him to the heart.

But he must not stay for that. "Hands off!" he cried again. "Don't touch me! Don't touch me! There is blood upon me! Now will you let me go?"

But it was Gascoygne's large, firm grasp upon his shoulder now. Adelaide was standing just before him, motionless, with her clasped and fallen hands, as if she had been struck by lightning. "All the less for that, Dominique," said he. "Now tell us what you mean."

"I mean," said Dominique then slowly, lifting his wretched face to the light, "that I am a murderer."

"And of whom, Dominique?" said Gascoygne gravely, his grasp still upon his shoulder.

"Of my enemy. And I do not regret it. I would do it again, if need were. There is nothing more to say about it."

"You mean the Lieutenant, then?"

"I mean the Lieutenant."

"What nonsense is this, Dominique? It is not three hours since I left him sitting in the window-place at the Lonely Beach —"

"It is not *two* hours since *I* left him there, but

dead — stone dead," said Dominique, as if obliged to recall all the ghastly scene, "and staring at the moon."

"You are mad, lad."

"Go and see if I am mad! Oh, you will find him there. He will be waiting for you, with the leer fixed on his damnable face, and the pistol — what have I done with that revolver? Yes, yes, I remember. It fell. It is in the grass. Do you think you had better keep me now? To be taken and tried for my crime? Do you hold me still?" he cried vehemently. "Do you not recoil from me? Do you not shudder at my touch? Oh, it is he that has forced me to this; it is he through whom I have become this execrable thing; it is he that has made my hands drip with murder! If he has a soul, may Heaven visit the penalty upon it!" And then he fell upon the grass before Adelaide, grovelling there. "No, no," he cried, "I am not fit to touch the hem of her garment. I may not kiss her feet."

But Adelaide was kneeling as instantly beside him, and was lifting his head in her arms. "I do not believe what you say," she sobbed. "And if I

did, oh, my poor Dominique, what difference would it make with your wife?"

"Dominique," said Gascoygne sternly, "I do not know what these heroics mean. I am going to take John, and go over to the Lonely Beach and discover. But you must promise me you will not leave this place."

"I cannot."

"That you will not leave this place. Now, listen. I cannot let Adelaide stay out of doors so long, but you will go into the grapery, — the glass is open, — and wait for me with her, or I will call your father — "

"My God, Gascoygne, don't do that!"

"What else can I do? I must call your father, or you must promise me to stay."

"I thought you used to be my friend, Gascoygne," implored Dominique. "Don't you see that I must go? Don't you see I can't drag Adelaide down with me, — that I set her free, — that she shall not be the wife of a felon, — that every moment I stay adds to my agonies, — that I am only a tramp on that highway to the nearest port? No, no, my father must not hear. Is there no

faith in man?" And he was on his feet again, eager and white in his passion of despair.

"I don't want to call him," said Gascoygne. "Give me your word to await me here, and I will not."

"I promise you anything," he said, "anything, if in return you promise that he shall not know I have been here."

"Unless you wish it. This way. Here; there are two rustic chairs. Be quiet, Dominique, till I return, — I may be gone two hours, — or I shall give you a composing-powder now."

"You can give me no composing-powder, Gascoygne. There is nothing to medicine my hurt. A thousand years from now, in this world or another, the wound will be just as raw and bleeding."

When Gascoygne had drawn the seats side by side, he left them, and it was but a few minutes before the cautious feet of the horse he bestrode might be heard going down the hill, followed by those of the one he led for John. And if any on the hill's brow had looked, they might presently have seen the two galloping over the bridge and

along the causeway, as if a host of goblins followed after.

Dominique sat with his elbows on the arms of his chair, his head resting in his hands, and his feet thrust out before him, saying nothing. Adelaide left his side, and went gently wandering up and down the walk. Over them streamed the westering moon tempered by the trailing shadows of the thick vine-leaves and the translucent grape bunches, where the light almost seemed to have gathered into shining drops and clusters. After a while she paused hesitatingly before him, and then, kneeling at his side, put her arms along his shoulders, and laid her head upon his breast. He sat still, neither stirring nor returning her embrace. She could feel the shiver thrilling through him. At length, as if he could bear it no longer, he rose, and, doing so, lifted her to her feet.

"Adelaide, I must not touch you, I must not speak to you," he said. "Oh, my God! It seems as if once I might take my own wife into my arms!"

And suddenly he had snatched her and folded her to his heaving breast, raining passionate kisses

down upon her face, kisses followed by a storm of tears, before he opened his arms and released her. She gathered up her fallen hair, blushing even in the moonlight filtering through the vines.

"Dominique," she said presently, going and putting both hands on his arm where he leaned against an arch, "am I not really your wife?"

"God knows you are," he said chokingly. "But you will not be long. You shall not be tied to anything so wretched as I. I came into your sweet, still life out of storm. I go back to my element. You will be sad, you will be sorry; you will grow careless, you will forget. Oh, I see it all!" he exclaimed. "Some night, when I shall be tossing on the storms of the south seas without a star, you will be happy and smiling, and going to and fro with the calm and stainless man who gives your home peace."

"Oh, what do you take me for, Dominique?" she said piercingly. "Can you think this of one who, you know, believes marriage to be a sacrament, and denies the possibility of divorce, even by death? I am your wife, you just said. Not even God can make it otherwise. And what are

wives for?" she cried. "To enjoy all the pleasures of life and to have none of its troubles? Would you be so cruel as to let me share your joy and not try to help you bear your sorrow —"

"Adelaide, it is no use. Though you speak with the tongues of angels, you cannot make black white. Husband and wife are one — you cannot be one with me. I told you I would mount to you. Oh, to what depth have I fallen instead! I will not let you hurt yourself so far as to become one flesh with the man —"

"Who committed a sin in an outburst of passion —"

"It was no outburst of passion. I rowed twelve miles, against wind and tide, to kill Ladeuce, meaning, every time I lifted the oar, to kill him. And he is dead. I see you shudder now as you think of it."

"Yes. I shudder. It is dreadful. I cannot make it out. It seems as if it never could have been my Dominique."

"It never was. It was quite another person from the Dominique you knew. That Dominique was an innocent lad, O Christ! in his worst ex-

cess! This Dominique's hands are as red as his heart is black! You see there is nothing between you, — your spotlessness retreats from him."

"I see nothing of the kind," said Adelaide, calmed by his turbulence. "I see that, if he were all you say, he would need me so much the more. Not only his help, his comforter, but, if we are husband and wife, if we are one, if he is the sin, as he says, and I am the innocence, then he cannot dispense with me, — my innocence shall bring him back his own. But, oh, Dominique, you make a mistake in thinking so well of me. I am — I am capable — I too, Dominique, could tread on the snake — "

"Adelaide, you drive me wild! You do a wrong! You, with your white soul! You — "

"Yes, if he were stinging to death one I loved. Oh!" she cried, as Dominique started at her words, "I felt it in my heart when I thought he was leading you astray."

"Yes, perhaps he led me astray. But a man has the choice of going or not. It was not for that — Adelaide! My darling! Say no more, say no more!" he cried, flinging himself aside.

"You will force me to betray myself. I would not have you, when I am gone, think I am all, all, all black, for I had reasons, terrible reasons — "

"I know them, Dominique."

"You know them!"

"I heard the old gardener, John, telling Gascoygne that he — served with the Lieutenant and Captain Dacre. You know the rest, Dominique."

"But you must tell me!" he insisted, while the furious current of his veins sung and resounded in his ears.

"On the *Nightbird*," she whispered tremblingly. "The — the slaver."

As she spoke, all Dominique's strength forsook him. His knees gave way; his face was ashen; he sank into the seat at hand. "And I have soiled my soul with murder to keep a secret that all the world knew!" he murmured.

"Nobody knew it but Gascoygne and I. Nobody does now."

How much more did she know, he questioned of himself, his heart fluttering like a leaf in a storm. That he was not Captain Dacre's son? That she was the wife of — what is this Ladeuce

called it — a grandee of Spain? He could not ask. A wild hope shook him, for half the moment, that she knew everything. But, like the black shadow of a sunbeam, came as swiftly the conviction again of his father's shame and misery if aware that the child of his love knew of his dishonor.

"No, no," he cried aloud; "it was not for that I made away with a life. Not that the creature alone knew the secret, but that he was about to make my father learn I knew it also! I never meant — I never meant, Adelaide, that you should have the cruel knowledge, either, that I had done this deed. I came but for just one last look at you, a look that should be an embrace, and you forced me to disclose myself. I meant then to disappear out of your life. But now you know it. It cannot be helped. Only if you ever loved me, do not let my father know it. That can be helped."

And then he suddenly became silent. Another word might be too much. She might learn that there was reason for Ladeuce to acquaint his father with his knowledge, might learn of that Spanish

secret and, with her high cast of thought, — seeing the work in the world to be done with such rank and wealth, such place and power, — she might feel that his first duty of all was to take up his burdens there, render allegiance to his old race, and refuse to abandon his post. Execrable secret, in which if he ever stirred finger, his father must suffer all he should be screened from, must suffer all the agony of looking in his son's eyes, conscious that Dominique knew of the deception, knew that he was not his son, knew of the black business in which the man was engaged when he became his son, — an agony worse to both than death! Dominique could bear to wear in the view of the woman he loved the stain of such base birth; he could not bear to break the old heart that loved him. He could give up Adelaide, happiness, hope. "Only death," he groaned, "would have been so much the easier."

"You must not think, Dominique," Adelaide said, after the long silence, with a timidity as if she felt herself recreant in hinting such a possibility, "that this has made my love for your — for our father the less. I knew it before I married

you. I pitied him so much, to think how he regretted, that I only loved him more and more. Perhaps I honored him the more. You remember, Dominique, we used to think those natures nobler that knew sin, and left it, than those with only idle and untempted guilelessness."

"We did n't know what we were talking about." He could not endure, in the tension of his nerves, to hear the one who loved his father almost as he did himself, speak of him as ever having sinned. And then there was another silence.

A bell from the chapel-spire below struck midnight. A little impatient bird outside stirred in his nest, and, dreaming it was morning, began to sing, and hushed himself again.

"I am as impatient as that bird," said Adelaide. "Now, Dominique, that I have told you we know the whole business, you will not think of going away?"

"It makes no difference," he answered her. "You cannot be the wife of a man who is not only a criminal, but who lives with a death sentence hanging over him. I should be away from this at once. It is hard in Gascoygne to keep me. If I

repented I should want to pay the penalty of my crime, you see. I do not want to. I do not repent. I am hardened and blood-stained — I have only a horror of myself that may lead to madness."

Adelaide had no answer to make him, but sat on the bench where she had sunk, softly weeping. He went over and sat beside her.

"At least once," he said, "lie in my arms and weep on my breast. Hush now, my darling, hush. Do not let me think I have broken your heart. I should break it indeed if I stayed."

And so the speechless hour passed, till there came a sound of horses' hoofs upon the bridge below; every stroke to Adelaide seemed to strike upon uncovered nerves, and to Dominique was like the swinging of a pendulum that measured off the moments of his respite. Then they thought they heard Gascoygne at the stables; a quiet step on the gravel and he had rejoined them.

"It is just as I thought," he said. "The purest nonsense. You are either suffering from illusion, Dominique, or you are a fool. Ladeuce is dead indeed —"

"I told you he was," said Dominique sullenly.

"But you did not kill him. He had been dead some time before you landed on the beach. He died of a disease of the heart, which I long ago told him might put an end to him any day. There was neither wound nor bruise nor bullet-mark upon him. John and I examined him thoroughly. Nor have I been content with that. Before we buried him at the foot of the old plum orchard near the meadow, and effaced all appearance of our work, I had a brief autopsy, to be assured for your sake, as I am assured, that I was certainly right. Are you satisfied now?"

"Why should I be?"

"Why should you be? Dominique, you put me out of all patience! What do you make of this, then? Here is your pistol. I found it in the grass. It is one of the old ivory-mounted pair with which we used to shoot at the buoy. Every ball is in it; every chamber is loaded. There has not been one discharged. You have fired no shot with that weapon."

"Do you really mean to say, Gascoygne —"

"I mean to say that you no more killed La-

deuce than I did. But he is dead and buried; his ship is burned; and that is the end of him. He will never be inquired for. And as for old John, his fealty to Captain Dacre is as great as when he sailed with him. He tells nothing of his service with your father but the bare fact of the service; and his gratitude to Mrs. Stuart and to Adelaide is so sincere that he may be trusted to keep our confidence. Now you will come in and go to bed like a rational man. It has been a ghastly affair, but we are well out of it. Come."

"And do you think, Gascoygne," cried Dominique, suddenly facing him, white and blazing as the star that was rising out of the sea behind them, "do you think that my hand was so much more worth than my soul?" What a laugh was that which burst through his lips! "Do you think," he cried again, "that because Fate and I had the same intention at the same moment, my intention was any the less because Fate struck first? Do you think that any two minutes or two hours of time could annihilate the fact of my fixed purpose? Was n't the murder done in my soul? You thirst for blood, and the blood is spilled by

another, — were you any the less blood-thirsty? Do you know what murder means? If you stop a planet in its course, there is heat enough set free to destroy it; if you stop a life in its course, the flames of hell shoot forth. No, no! oh no! I am as much the murderer as I was before. It is just as necessary that I should go. I am as much at variance with all that is peaceful and spotless and —"

"Why, what is this?" said another voice, and they saw Captain Dacre coming up the long walk from the door, with the last ray of the moon glancing redly through the crystal panes upon his face.

"Adelaide, dear, are you here? I told your mother you had gone to bed, and I locked the doors for her. But voices and sounds have waked me, and kept me awake, till at last — Dominique! Dominique!" And then with a swift step, with an utterance half joy and half despair, Dominique fell insensible at his father's feet.

"That ends the business," said Gascoygne. And with the Captain's aid they lifted the unconscious form and carried it up to the Captain's bed.

When Gascoygne came down to breakfast in the morning, he said he had been up all night, for Dominique had come home, and lay at the point of death with congestion of the brain.

## XVIII.

"I THOUGHT," said Allia, looking up at Gascoygne's intelligence, with the sunshine making a dazzle across her topaz-colored eyes, "that something very queer must have happened. There seemed to be sounds in the air everywhere about the house last night. I heard horses' hoofs, and a voice crying, and then I remembered that burning ship, and thought of the stories of the Wild Ladies, and I did n't know but my Voodoo bead was at work. I was really a little frightened. I knocked at Adelaide's door, but she would n't answer; and I wrapped up my head in the coverlet before I could get to sleep."

"You grow wiser every day you live, Allia," said Gascoygne."

"I wonder," said Mrs. Stuart, when Allia, who had quite breakfasted before Gascoygne's arrival, had half danced, half flung herself out of the room at his remark, "where Adelaide is. She is always so early."

"Adelaide," said Gascoygne, balancing his coffee-cup a lingering moment, "is sitting with her husband."

"Is what?"

"Is with Dominique, cousin."

"Dominique? Her husband? Have you left your senses? Gascoygne! Will you tell me what you mean?" said Mrs. Stuart, her hand suddenly trembling so that the ruby flickered like a flame.

"Why, nothing very bad," with his pleasant, reassuring smile, "only that Adelaide has been the wife of Dominique since —"

"Adelaide! My daughter! Gascoygne, you are dreaming!"

"On the contrary, I am painfully aware of being wide awake."

"But my child — deceiving me!"

"Well," said Gascoygne, "there are some circumstances where we do wrong to do right. And when Adelaide married, she thought —"

"I cannot believe it. I must go to her."

"You had better be seated again. There must not be a syllable whispered in Dominique's presence; and Adelaide is in too exalted a condition

to know if she is on this earth or another. It is perfectly true." He paused a moment and regarded her. "While you were attending to your Confederated Charities she was arranging a little charity of her own. You are surprised? I have presumed you had no other intention."

"No other intention!" sobbed Mrs. Stuart. "Gascoygne, how very unkind of you! I always meant, I always meant, Gascoygne, that she should marry you."

"The stars meant differently. The stars," said Gascoygne gently, "that let you take an utter stranger unquestioned into your family and educate his child with your own. But the thing is done, my dear cousin. I don't know that you need to shed tears over it. I think I should make the best of it. As for me, I am still here, and always shall be. The poor you have always with you, you know—"

"Why, Gascoygne, you have a fortune! Are you beginning to fear coming to want?"

"I came to want long ago. It takes more than money, cousin, to make good fortune. And, meanwhile, you have a son-in-law who will love you

very truly, that is if he lives to love any one — "

"The poor boy! The poor child!" said Mrs. Stuart, looking up with the sudden tears wetting her face. "There is a great deal that is delightful about him, Gascoygne. And he never had any mother. I have always felt like a mother to him, though. And if — if he is really my own son now — "

"There is no doubt about it," said Gascoygne, laughing in the midst of his apprehensions.

"Then I must go to him at once. He must have nurses, and Miss Grey and I will oversee them. How fortunate I am in having Miss Grey for a fixture in the family! But that makes no difference about Miss Adelaide," she said, rising. "I am just as indignant with her. To think that a child of mine — "

"Is it all her fault? Where have your eyes been? I think I would smother my wrath, cousin. Adelaide must have gone through with a great deal. And now with Dominique's life hanging in the scale — "

"That is true, Gascoygne. I remember how I

felt when my poor husband — Adelaide with a husband! The baby! Gascoygne, is n't it like a romance?" And Mrs. Stuart came round and kissed Gascoygne, who had finished his coffee, and then bustled out of the room, the pleasure of a child with a new play, of a philanthropist with a new pauper, perhaps rather of a mother with a new son, beginning to blossom in her bosom.

Gascoygne rose and walked about the room, and paused at last at the teak-wood desk where Mrs. Stuart kept her correspondence. Over it, wreathed with a long branch of the white rose vine that had been indulged in its determination of thrusting itself into the room, hung the portrait he had made of Adelaide long ago, with the life and lustre of her young beauty in the flower-like face and starry eyes. "That, at least," he murmured, "nothing can take from me." Then he went to his own retreat. When Captain Dacre came down he saw another picture hanging beside Adelaide's, the pastel Gascoygne had given her, and on which he had imprinted all he could of the fire and radiance of the Southern countenance she loved; round about it were flung sprays of the brier roses torn

from the garden wall where the two children had been wont to read their books together.

Perhaps that sacrificial garland of roses indicated the state of feeling of the whole household towards Dominique, the delighted acceptance of him as one of themselves now in fact, the delighted acceptance of the romantic circumstance coming into their still lives that he had been Adelaide's husband all this time, authorized as that was by Captain Dacre's knowledge of it. If it was a delightedness kept in abeyance during the days and nights when Gascoygne went without sleep by the sick-bed, it was allowed full play when Dominique rose, if not refreshed and strong from his fever as Achilles from the river Styx, yet clothed and in his right mind, and glancing, every time the door opened, for Adelaide, whom her mother had rigorously excluded from his room.

It had become evident to Gascoygne during both Dominique's delirium and calm, that there was no change in his feelings or intentions. He was floating alone on clear far-off night seas under the equator, all through the first; to the second he came with that weary sense of taking up a burden

that every one feels on waking after disaster. He did not ask for Adelaide; it was plain he did not mean to do so, at least as yet; he had no right — he meant to claim no right. The first time that he awoke from sleep, opening his eyes on other than the phantasmagoria of the heated brain, it was to see his father at the foot of the bed, and the same smile kindled and grew and overspread his eyes that the Captain remembered in the child he had rescued from the sea. For long after that he was content to sleep, with the weariness following his fever, and wake to meet that glance again, or else to lie with his hand grasped in his father's, saying nothing, almost thinking nothing. When he did speak, it was only to signify that this was too pleasant to be anything but brief, and he must be off when he should find a ship again.

"I came very near crossing the dark river this time, did n't I?" he said. "Well, I must soon be sailing a different sort of sea. I shall not get my strength again till I am out on blue water."

When, however, his strength began to return, it came swiftly, helped by the coming coolness of

those days when the year seems to pause at its full ripeness. He said nothing to Captain Dacre of his life since they had seen him before, or of what had brought him back.

"I may, perhaps, have some difficulty in getting a ship again," was all he said to Gascoygne.

"Not any," said Gascoygne. "Have you forgotten the *Winged Victory?* She is nearly ready to take in cargo now; and it will only be like all the rest of my cousin's behavior if she sends her to Australia under your command. I presume you consider yourself competent."

"To handle a fleet of her."

"Well, perhaps we can give you a clean bill of health by the time the agent says the word."

"I don't know," said Dominique, "that I can accept the command. I must be out of this altogether; and that is no way."

"You may have to accept it. Captain Durringe has lately died, and it will be a serious loss if the ship is laid up. It is Adelaide's property, you know, and so your own."

"Then, by heaven, I never will set foot on her deck!"

"We won't argue the matter, Dominique; you are not yet strong enough. I had hoped the fever had burned all that nonsense out of you. If your wife chooses to take you with all the stains that you harangued of to her, I cannot think that you are the scamp to desert her. She, at any rate, does not think you are, and has been in person to her agent with her orders. I believe the ship can clear within the month; there is a state-room engaged for a single passenger, which may be pleasant for you, and if not, it can't be helped now. By the time you have sailed to the antipodes in her, have got on the other side of the earth and under a different co-ordination of stars, you will have seen in another light the circumstances that have been troubling you, and will have returned to your senses. Come, come, Dominique, you force me to a dilemma. Shall I commit you to the *Winged Victory*, or to a mad-house?"

Dominique still shook his head.

"Perhaps," said Gascoygne, "I ought to bring up my allies. Your father, who became persuaded from your wanderings that you would go away, is happy now in the thought of keeping just the

tether of the *Winged Victory* ownership about you."

"My wanderings, Gascoygne!"

"Oh, you need have no anxiety," said Gascoygne with a laugh. "Your wanderings were only out at sea — 'out of this, out of this.'"

"Out of this," said Dominique. "Yes, out of this. Why do you urge me to darken other lives with my trouble? If I did not virtually with my right hand do all that in my madness I thought I did, I am as much the culprit — it was no fault of mine that I did not. Listen, Gascoygne. Here is where it is with me. I did an evil deed. I do not regret it. I am under conviction of sin. But I do not repent, and I never shall, and there is no forgiveness without repentance. Don't you see, then, that I am already in hell?"

"Child's talk, Dominique! It is enough that you didn't do the deed. The rest is moonshine. You are still under an illusion and need to continue my treatment and follow my advice. Do you remember, my lad, when you used to say that it seemed to you, the night I helped you off the wreck, that I made you?" Perhaps Gascoygne

forgot with a purpose that it was he and not Dominique who had cherished that fancy. "If I did," he continued, "it seems to me I have a right to do as I please with you; and I am pleased to send you 'out of this' by means of the *Winged Victory*. Moreover, Dominique, — and this is all I shall say about it, — the captain of such a vessel has a chance at fortune that does not come to the second or third officer of any other. You have a chance, in accepting this opportunity, to make it possible for your father to throw away the money gained in the way that grieves him, and, with your purse at his hand, never to feel his loss. Look, now," said Gascoygne, ceasing his customary pacing of the floor and coming to sit down opposite Dominique's chair, "suppose all Captain Dacre's wealth went to found an asylum for certain of his African people, either the orphans or the sick and old — what happy years will he spend in seeing it all done, in superintending it after it is done, in feeling that every day he wipes out the black work of some other day —"

"Gascoygne, do you think you need to urge that upon me? Have I dreamed of anything else?

Has he? Has n't he been seeking, this dozen years, for the means to let him do it and not defraud me or render me suspicious? Has n't he tried to make jewels in his laboratory, to make phosphates, to find out the secrets of the earth's wealth — "

"Well, in this way you find them for him. And can you see any fairer prospect of happiness than in closing or tearing down the Lonely Beach house, and yourself coming home from your voyages to this house on the hill — a better gift to Adelaide each voyage than all the pearls the *Winged Victory* ever brought — to your friends here, to your father, to your wife, to your children?"

"O Gascoygne," groaned Dominique, "why will you tempt me so?"

Was it a dream that Dominique dreamed in the morning twilight, between sleeping and waking, or was it some forefeeling of the future that surely one day was to be his own? In it he had come off the sea one sunny morning, all bronzed and bearded, had come up the gardens, terrace over terrace, brimmed with birds and bees and blossoms, and into the hall where, as he had seen

it once before, the sunlight streamed again through the jewelled glass of the skylight over a woman with just that aura of added beauty that belongs to the women of dreams, or to the dreams of women the dreamer loves, a woman gracious and beautiful as only Adelaide could be, with every year an added grace, — and streamed, too, over the group of babies round her there, ideal babies, this with the father's eyes, that with the mother's mouth. The air is full of the sweet, sweet music of their cries and laughter; they have been telling fairy stories, and frolic now in some sportive game, puss in the corner or blind-man's-buff, he thinks, and one with blindfolded eyes lays hold of those that come across her way. "And who is this?" the little creature cries, as with uplifted finger to the rest he has stooped till her tender hands outspread have found his bearded face. He thrills and trembles, even in his dream, as the timid touches go wandering over it. "And who is this?" cry all the rest. And the little creature shrinks away. "I don't know who you are," she says, in a voice that half declares her doubt, "unless," with a memory of her fairy story,

"you are the — the Marquis of Carabas." And before the chorus of warbling voices can shout, "It is papa! It is papa!" before he takes her in his arms, with all the others clinging about, and the gracious, tearful mother smiling down upon them, the glad old man hurrying forward, "I am the Marquis of Carabas," he answers her. And, dream or not, it is all he ever tells wife or child or friend of the old castle in Spain.

## XIX.

PERHAPS Mrs. Stuart builded better than she knew in keeping Adelaide away in those long days. As Dominique sat in his room, or went out upon the upper gallery, he could hear her voice about the house; this step seemed to be hers just approaching, but it went by; the flutter of that curtain was her garment; the cup of life was just about to touch his lips, and all the pleasant waters spilled. He walked in the garden some paces daily, but there was neither bloom nor perfume there without Adelaide. He sat at the table a few times, but he fasted for more than food, in Adelaide's absence, although good reason was given. When he came down at length to leave for the *Winged Victory*, he had seen Adelaide only once in all the time of convalescence, once as he opened his door and looked down the stairway and she was standing in the hall, with the colored lights falling about her, and

a glad answer in the eyes that were looking up at him. To-day she was gone again. There were others there to bid him farewell. Mrs. Stuart was whispering, "This is your home, my son;" Miss Grey was saying, "It will not be long;" his father was clasping him, and he his father as if he were a boy again. But Adelaide was not there. She could not trust herself to say good-by? Maybe it was as well. Not yet in his full strength, had he felt those arms about his neck, that flower-sweet breath upon his face, it might not have been possible for him to cling to that still unsurrendered determination of coming back no more. His father was so happy here he hardly needed him, and, if he did, he could come to him when he had sent the *Winged Victory* home with another master, and himself trod the deck of some ship that never ran by the north star. After all, the fire of the fever had burned out none of his indelible sense of wrong-doing; only the sweetness of that possible home and heaven had tempted him.

But alone on the quarter-deck in blue water, with the fresh west wind swelling the vast sails

and blowing far away up the dark depths to shake a keener sparkle from the stars, it was only with a dreary soul and heavy heart that Dominique looked out that night over the shadowy seas. Courage enough, but to what purpose? Youth, but with what hope? Life, but with how much strength? The great black night, horizon behind horizon, was no blacker than this phantom of despair that loomed above the edge of his inner horizon, no blacker than the conviction of guilt that never once had left him, that never could leave one who knew not how to fight it, who had no help to fight it, who was alone! And he leaned over the rail as if the deeps might give him the help he needed, or the grave he craved. "Alone, alone," he said.

But as he spoke, a voice replied, "Alone?"

He had turned at the sound of the first syllable, feeling a swift and indignant impatience with the presumption of the passenger whom he had not yet seen. "Alone?" said the voice again, like a chord of music. "Not alone, Dominique, with your wife and God." And it was Adelaide who threw back her hood and looked him in the face.

"You could not leave me, you see," she said with her sweet smile. "I could not let you go. O Dominique! You will not think ill of me? But if you have a fight to fight, your wife must fight it with you. If you have a stain to cleanse, your wife must seek the cleansing waters with you! We will ask for help together, Dominique."

Already so much help — perhaps the rest would follow. Something like the echo of forgotten joy swept through him. And, as the ship rose on the swelling billow, no longer with the unconcern of unanswering, unfathomable immensity did skies and waters gleam, while Dominique's gaze returned to them with Adelaide in his arms.

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